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*Abraham Lincoln.*

*From Photograph by Brady, Washington, 1865.*

# ABRAHAM LINCOLN:

## THE TRUE STORY OF A GREAT LIFE.

*SHOWING THE INNER GROWTH, SPECIAL TRAINING, AND PECULIAR  
FITNESS OF THE MAN FOR HIS WORK.*

BY WILLIAM O. STODDARD,

ONE OF PRESIDENT LINCOLN'S SECRETARIES DURING THE WAR OF THE  
REBELLION.

**With Illustrations.**

"The public life of Hampden . . . resembles a regular drama which can be criticised as a whole, and every scene of which is to be viewed in connection with the main action."—MACAULAY'S *Essay on Pitt*.

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## PREFACE.

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A STRICTLY personal life of ABRAHAM LINCOLN has long been regarded by many as a literary necessity.

There can be no question but that the popular idea of Mr. LINCOLN's character is vague, fragmentary, and incomplete. His origin, growth, and development, his education and his services, rightly presented and understood, offer one of the noblest lessons to be found in the world's history. To present such a biography is the single aim of this book. It is a record of political and military events only as these in some manner became a part of, or set forth, or illustrated the character and services of the great President. The writer knew Mr. LINCOLN well, and had many opportunities of preparation for such a work as this. These were obtained during a residence of several years, before the war, in Mr. LINCOLN's own district in Illinois, and as one of his assistant private secretaries at Washington, from the beginning of his administration, in 1861, to about the end of September, 1864. Every effort possible has been made to put away partisan feeling and the blindnesses of personal affection, and to produce and present a faithful portrait of the man as he was.

The mass of material offering required the exclusion of much that was interesting but not necessary, and the most rigid condensation, in order to keep the book within reasonable limits as to size. Much will be found that is not contained in any other biography of Mr. LINCOLN, but nothing which is not believed to be entirely trustworthy. In the records of his earlier life, the work of Messrs. WARD H. LAMON and WILLIAM H.

HERNDON has been trusted wherever the testimonies of other writers have seemed to clash with it.

No apology is made for not inserting at any point brief biographies of other distinguished men and collateral accounts of important matters of history, even though they may have a distinct relation to Mr. LINCOLN's labors and the great events of his day. It is proper, however, to express the author's gratification at knowing that a work is now preparing, by his former office-associates, Messrs. JOHN G. NICOLAY and JOHN HAY, which is to be an exhaustive historical record of "the life and times" of Mr. LINCOLN. He does not even enter the field they have preëmpted, but is glad that so good a work is in such capable and devoted hands as theirs.

The time is fully ripe for the study of Mr. LINCOLN's individuality. This book is simply intended to set that forth in such a form that it can be studied, and in the hope that a new generation of Americans may learn to love and honor and imitate a man who seems to have been in himself an embodiment and personification of all that is best in American national life.

W. O. S.

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# ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

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## CHAPTER I.

### A CHAOTIC BEGINNING.

The Birthplace—The Family—The Homestead—1809 to 1816.

"THAT's the place, Abe. You was born thar."

"'Tain't much of a place to be born in. It's a heap meaner'n the place we're a-livin' in now."

A man of little over the middle height, broad-shouldered, powerfully built, and somewhat rough-looking, leaned upon a long rifle and gazed at a forlorn log-house, not far from the roadside, in a wretched, ill-tended corn-field. At his side was a slim, overgrown boy of seven years, who might easily have passed for three years older. The growth which had come to him so fast was indicated not only by his size, but by the queer, thoughtful expression of his strongly marked, sunburned face. It was full of boyish fun, to recklessness; and yet it wore an unchildlike sadness also, as if the kind of human life into which he had been born were already teaching him its lessons and leaving upon him its forever indelible marks.

"They call it Rock Spring Farm," remarked his father.

"Do they? Wall, I remember the spring well enough, and the rocks too; but, pop, whar's the farm?"

"All around, hereaway. It was the first piece of land I ever owned, sech as it was. I didn't own it very much, nuther."

He did not look like a man who had ever owned much of land or of anything else. He was barefooted, and his patched homespun trowsers barely reached his ankles: but that was

more than could be said of Abe's. On his head, too, was a coonskin cap, while his odd-looking son wore nothing above his uncombed shock of dark hair. A greasy buckskin shirt completed the outer garments of Tom Lincoln, with a powder-horn and bullet-pouch slung over his shoulders in lieu of all ornament. His leathern waist-belt marked yet one more difference in the apparel of the two, as Abe's left shoulder was crossed by the one suspender with which his trowsers were tied up, and it met no buttons at its lower ends.

"Pop, do you reckon you'll find anything meaner'n that over in Injianny?"

"I'll tell ye when I git back. We'd best be movin' now. I want to git out of Kaintucky; I jest do."

"Wall, pop, I don't know as I keer much whar we go to."

Tom strode away down the road, but it was marvelous how easily the light-footed youngster kept up with him. Mile after mile they went on together, along roads which were only here and there bordered by anything which would nowadays be considered cultivation. The State of Kentucky was a very young one in the fall of the year 1816, and was barely beginning to work its way out of the backwoods into the long, toilsome path towards civilization. Still, if Abe Lincoln and his father had been on the lookout for a poorer piece of "improvement" than "Rock Spring Farm," they would probably have failed to find it during that day's walking.

A poor place indeed, both land and dwelling. There Abraham Lincoln was born, on the 12th day of February, 1809. He spent there the first four years of his life, and it was such life as was possible in such a hut as he had now been taken back to look at. Its hardening, narrowing, stunting conditions, creating barriers and fetters to be afterwards burst or broken, are worth a careful recognition and study.

The end of Abe's tramp gave him a chance to compare with the place of his birth the cabin he was now at home in. It was just a trifle better, and the land around presented less of an ap-

pearance of utter poverty. He laughed a little when he saw it, not knowing, yet, how much to make any human being somber-faced there was in a prospect of being shut up to the necessity of spending his days in such a home as that.

A dark-featured, handsome, but sad-faced woman, of middle height, stood in the doorway of the log-cabin as her husband and son drew near.

"Now, Tom, you haven't fetched home any game this time."

"Wall, no, Nancy. Abe and I kinder wandered off to Hodgenville, and I met some of the fellers, and we had a talk, and then we took a circuit round and looked at the old place. It's wuss'n it ever was, Nancy."

"Meanest kind," grumbled Abe; but his mother looked sadder than before, and his father went on:

"Then we struck for home. I reckon I'll take water to-morrer. You never seen a deader place'n town is, jest now. Nothin' doin'. No kind of fun. No chances. I'm gwine to quit Kaintuck, Naney; I'm set on that."

"I don't keer whar we go. We can't make a poorer out than we've made yer."

Not without an effort. It needed but a glance at the surroundings of the homestead to perceive the justice of Nancy's despairing criticism. The hands of lazy improvidence and of the poverty that comes with it had fallen upon and withered everything but the weeds. There were a few acres of plowed ground between the house and the forest. A crop of corn had been harvested from the patch, but such fall plowing as had followed had been done by the noses of the hogs and not by human labor. It was a place to move away from, surely; but the people who had made it what it was were likely to carry with them all its real disadvantages.

Nancy turned wearily into the house, and Tom did not follow her. He walked away upon another errand, and Abe went with him. Half a mile, not at all hurried, brought them to the bank of a good stream of water. A rude flatboat lay

moored against the shore, and Tom looked at it with pride in his eyes as he said,

"I made her myself, I did."

She looked like the work of some such man. A good enough craft in which to float down stream; but no sensible navigator would have undertaken to urge her blunt nose and ill-balanced bulk in any other direction. Still, she could carry weight, and had a cargo already on board. There were a dozen or so of barrels, and these, with some boxes and bags and other matters, were stowed unevenly around, in such a way as to render the clumsy craft yet more unmanageable.

"Pop," said Abe, "do you reckon you'll ever git her back?"

"Wal, no. That ain't what she's made for. Reckon I'll make enough outen the trip to start us in Injianny."

The flatboat was looked at and admired, and the father and son went home to the slender supper of milk and corn-bread provided for them by Nancy, Tom but dimly knew how. The evening was consumed in varying calculations of the sure profits of the voyage of the flatboat and the sale of her cargo. About all the comment his wife could muster courage to make was,

"Hope ye will. You've traded yer last hog for it, and pretty much everything else thar was left."

"Now don't you be skeered, Nancy. I'm bound to make a new start, I am. Abe and Sally mought as well keep on gwine to school whilst I'm gone. Reckon they won't light onto any schoolin' around in the woods arter we git squatted over into Injianny."

The one fact which came out more plainly than any other was that, come what might of the trading expedition and the cargo of the flatboat, Tom Lincoln had made an end of his prospects in Kentucky, and that a new start somewhere else had now become a financial necessity.

## CHAPTER II.

## HAPHAZARD MIGRATION.

Tom Lincoln's Venture—Little Abe—The Trip through the Woods—  
From one Hut to another—1816.

AT an early hour the next morning, the Lincoln family were gathered on the bank of the Rolling Fork to see the precious flatboat pushed away. She had been built and launched at the mouth of Knob Creek, a stream that ran past their own cabin, but with too little depth of water to float so ambitious a craft as Tom had now constructed.

"She'll do, Nancy. This 'ere's the biggest venter ever I made."

"Tom, do you reckon three weeks'll fetch ye home?"

"Sure as shootin'. It's only a float down Rollin' Fork to Salt River, and down that to the Ohio. Once I git thar, I kin sell out the cargo, all along shore. I'll make a location on the Injianny side, and then I'll come back a-kitin'. Good-by, Nancy. 'By, Sally. Abe, jest you look sharp, now, while I'm gone."

A chorus of Good-bys answered him, and then his wife stood on the bank, silently watching the drift of his awkward boat down the rapid current of the Rolling Fork.

"Abe," said his sister, "don't you wish he'd let you go?"

"Reckon I do. I'd jest like to be thar when she lops over."

"She can't upset."

"Can't she? Wall, all I know is, pop can swim."

Sally Lincoln was two years older than Abe and a good deal better-looking, but she was hardly as tall, and he was sure to keep ahead of her in mere size. She looked at him, too, as if

she were already beginning to regard him in the light of a "big brother." She had been originally named after her mother, but then, and in later years, there were too many "Nancies" under the Lincoln roof, and she is remembered only as Sally.

"I do hope he'll git through all right," muttered Tom's wife, as she turned moodily away. Then she added, in a louder key:

"Now you, Abe, Sally, jest you git for the Friend Farm. Tell Caleb Hazel he's only to hev three weeks more of ye."

"Reckon 'twon't take more'n that to learn what he knows," chuckled Abe; but Sally answered him, a little sharply:

"Ef you don't take in more from him than you did from Zach Riney, it won't do you any sort o' good."

"Git each of ye a chunk of corn-bread," said Nancy, "and then you make yer tracks. It's only four mile to go, and you needn't be late ef you don't l'iter. He ain't pertikler 'bout bein' late, no how."

Whether that were true or not, Sally had a sad report to make of her brother on her return from school that evening.

"Licked again!" exclaimed his mother. "Ef yer father was home, you know what 'd come to ye."

"Mom," added Sally, gravely, "that ain't all. He said he wished old Caleb and the entire school was onto pop's flatboat a-goin' down Rollin' Fork."

"Did you say that, Abe?"

"It'd be more'n three weeks 'fore they'd git back," chuckled the young rebel. But it may be that Nancy Lincoln's heart was a little full that night, for she took no further notice of her son's misconduct. It was nothing new to find that he was more than seven years old in all manner of mischief. And yet his childish eyes were now following her own, sadly enough, as she looked around the one room inclosed by the log walls of the cabin. It had always been poorly furnished, even for such a home, and now Tom Lincoln's great venture had stripped it



almost bare. He had traded nearly everything tradable to obtain the cargo of his flatboat, and the place looked dreadfully desolate. For some reason he had even taken with him his kit of carpenter's tools,—for Tom was a jack-of-all-trades,—and the now empty corner where it once had stood spoke eloquently of the sure changes to come.

The going or remaining of the Lincoln family would make no changes in the little farm. There was a good deal of wild, rough beauty in the neighborhood. Knob Creek could not float a flatboat, and was only moderately good for fishing; but its banks, up and down through the heavy timber, had a reputation of their own for woodchucks, or "ground-hogs," and little Abe had long since discovered that there was more fun to be had in digging out one of these than in hunting for the right way to spell a word. He had learned to hunt woodchucks even before leaving Rock Spring Farm, along Nolin Creek, and on Knob Creek he had the company of his cousin, Dennis Hanks, in that and in the higher art of catching fish.

There was almost as much to be learned in the woods, and on the water and under it, as from Caleb Hazel; and yet Abe had prospered notably under both his present schoolmaster and Zachariah Riney, considering how very few months in all he received the benefit of their instructions.

He was yet to be a hard student, indeed, but without professional masters; so that in his ripe manhood he should be forced to say that all the "schooling" given him from the first had amounted to less than one year of regular tuition.

It was not likely that studious tendencies would be increased in a Kentucky boy of less than eight years by the prospect of a great journey into the mysterious wilderness of Indiana.

At that precise date this was still a "territory," and remained so until early in the following winter. The possession of its forests, and of the fertile prairies beyond them to the westward, was still sullenly disputed by the red Indians, and the tide of immigration was but beginning to set in that direction.

For more than a generation Kentucky itself had been, in the strife between the savages and the settlers, the same "dark and bloody ground" which it had been for ages before the white men came, in endless struggles for its hunting-grounds, between the warring tribes of the red men. It was yet to become the scene of bloodier battles, the causes and magnitude of which could not then have been imagined by any man. The especial cause existed and was fast increasing; but it is worthy of note that there were but a few score of negro slaves in the broad reach of country then known as Hardin County, and which contained the several temporary residences of Tom Lincoln; also that the emigrants from Kentucky and other slave States into Illinois and Indiana did not go to escape contact with human servitude, and did not even become antislavery men, to any extent, in their new homes.

Abraham Lincoln was in no sense whatever born or reared as an abolitionist, and such prejudices as his father may have had were not opposed to any one particular kind of labor.

Tom Lincoln came back, and he came by land and on foot, and he had a tale to tell when Nancy asked him how well he had sold his cargo.

"Sold it? Wal, ye-es, I sold what thar was left of it. The best part on it went off down the Ohio, 'bout the time that thar flatboat of mine got twisted into an eddy and upset."

"So ye kem back afoot, an' nothin' to show for it."

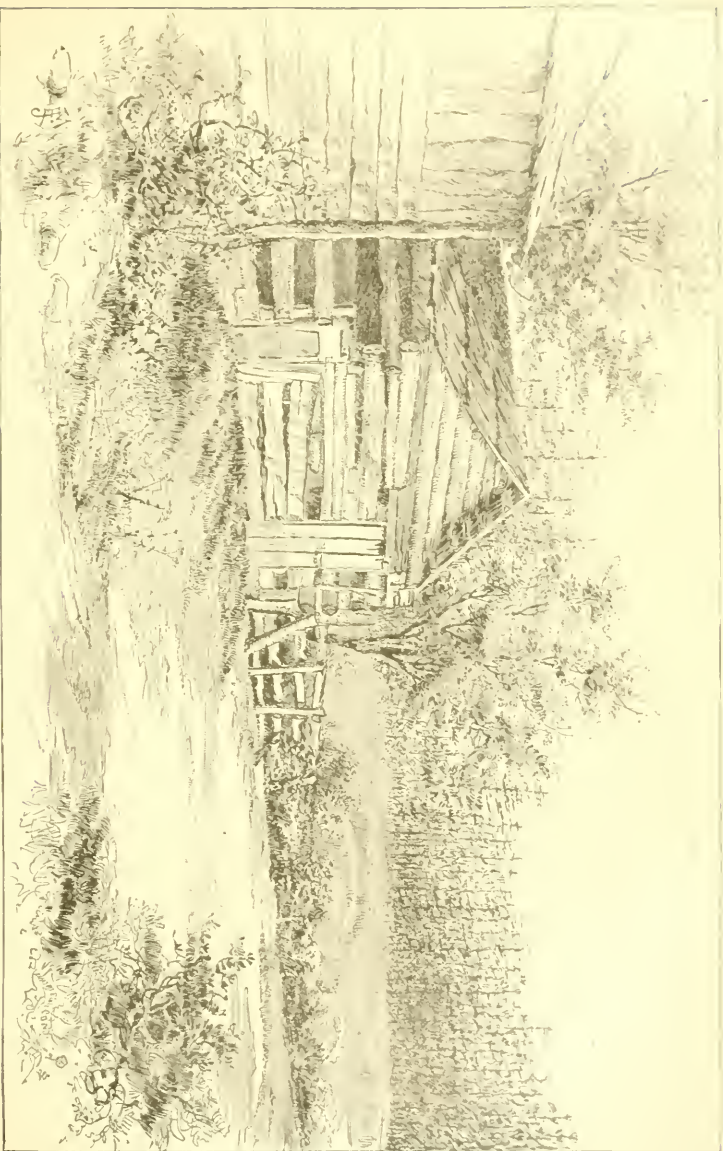
"Not quite so bad as that. I saved my kit of tools, and my rifle, and some of the barr'ls. I got the boat righted too, and I sold her, and I fished up some of the other things and I sold 'em. B-ut Nancy, I tell ye, I've located!"

"Found a place?"

"Best kind; and not a soul to interfere. It's jest about sixteen mile back from the Ohio River, and a sweeter spot you never seen. We'll light outen this to-morrer."

"I don't keer how soon we go."





LINCOLN HOMESTEAD.



It was not in Tom's nature to really move so promptly, and some days went by before the departure took place.

Transportation of some sort was a necessity, and horses were of small price in Kentucky in those days, except for the higher grades. Somehow or other, and by whatever title, Tom managed to obtain the services of two, such as they were. They were at all events good enough to carry what property he now had remaining, and there was little need of any wagon to roll behind them. That, too, was just as well, considering the nature of the roads to be traveled and the seasoned toughness of the bare feet of Tom Lincoln and his sad-faced wife, and of their boy and girl. There was no thought of tempting again the perils of Rolling Fork and Salt River and the Ohio on any kind of boat or float. Tom had had all the water he wanted.

Over in the graveyard, near Hodgenville, there was a very small green hillock, to which Mrs. Lincoln paid a visit, taking Abe with her, during those days of waiting. All she said to him about it was that if the little boy lying there had lived, he and Sally would now have a brother to travel to Indiana with them.

The day for departure came at last, and the route to be traveled had been determined beforehand. Towns and villages were scarce enough in all that region, and the few wayside taverns were on the lines of the more frequented highways. Little, however, did Tom Lincoln or his wife care for that, and the children did not know enough to give such things a thought. The whole forest, from Knob Creek to the Ohio, and as far beyond that river as any one might choose to go, was one grand hotel, open by night and day, and wherein there was no danger of being elbowed by other guests. Whenever a day's journey should be completed it would only be necessary to unpack the tired horses and turn them loose to pick their own supper. A fire could be kindled with flint and steel, and Mrs. Lincoln and Sally could fry a little bacon or cook such game as Tom's rifle might provide. They were almost sure to fall in with eatable wild creatures in the course of each day's march.

The burdens of the horses were not so heavy that they could not now and then take on also a human weight, and there was no special demand for haste.

It would be a mistake to describe the Lincoln family as undergoing hardships or privations in such a journey as they were now making. It was more like a prolonged "picnic" than anything else. At night, a bed of boughs with a blanket thrown over them was as soft and comfortable a resting-place as they had ever known. There was plenty to eat and drink; the autumn weather was fine; there was no shadow of peril; and as for any other matter, it was as Nancy had said, and any kind of change offered a reasonable hope of bettering their condition. So they went on through the woods and opens until they came out in sight of the Ohio River.

"Yonder's Thompson's Ferry," exclaimed Tom. "I knowed we was on the right track. We'll git across afore sundown. I left all the truck I didn't sell right over thar, with a feller named Posey. Now, Nancy, hurrah for Injianny! What does it look like to ye?"

"Most like any other piece of woods ever I seen."

So it did; and so did all the country north, and the country west of it, to the great prairies; and so did the Northwest, all the vast region which has since been carved into States and occupied by so many millions of happy and unhappy human beings.

A mere piece of woods, to look at; but in among the trees and thickets, between the Ohio River and the lakes and the British boundary-line, there were worse than wild beasts for a settler to contend with. These, too, were there in great abundance: buffalo, elk, deer, panthers, bears, catamounts, wild turkeys, small animals innumerable; these might even be regarded as a resource and a perpetual harvest. There, however, wandering in hunting and war parties or gathered in their villages, were the Sioux, Sacs, Foxes, Pawnees, and a score of other terrible tribes. Among the many chiefs and leaders of these was the mighty Black-

hawk, even then a middle-aged warrior of high renown, and little Abe was to know many valuable things hereafter with the help of that particular Indian. He was, in a manner, to go to a school of his keeping, and learn in it great practical lessons for the benefit of his country.

Abe knew nothing of Blackhawk then, however, and his deepest interest for the moment was centred upon the flat-bottomed ferry-boat which was to convey them across the swift and muddy water of the Ohio. It bore a remarkable likeness to the hapless craft his father had launched at the mouth of Knob Creek. The passage was made in safety, nevertheless, and so was the rest of the march to the Posey homestead; and here the Lincoln family passed their first night in the Territory of Indiana.

The next morning a lumber-wagon was obtained, and laden with the packs from the two horses and the poor relics of the cargo of Tom's flatboat. To these were added a few sacks of corn, and then all would have been very well if there had been any road before them by which to travel.

"I've been thar," said Tom. "I kin find the spot, and the trail's been blazed pretty much all the way."

True enough; but when he made his choice of a location he had been unincumbered, except by the rifle on his shoulder and the axe with which he "blazed" the trees to mark his path. Now he had a team and a loaded wagon behind him, and these required a wider path than that by which a hunter's feet might pass. There was no help for it, and a road had to be cut by good hard ax-work wherever the trees stood too closely together for the wagon to squeeze between. The distance was but sixteen miles in a straight line, but it was much more by the winding road Tom Lincoln made. By the time he reached the land he was to settle on, he may be said to have fairly earned it. He did reach it; and the autumn of Abraham Lincoln's seventh year found him a very new settler in one of the very newest of all new countries.

## CHAPTER III.

## CHILD-LIFE IN THE WILDERNESS.

Pole-shelter—Log Cabin and Clearing—Pestilence and Suffering—A Forest Funeral—1818.

A GRASSY hillock in the middle of a primeval forest is a very pretty thing to look upon. It will serve well, too, as a place for a temporary camp, in the perfect weather of an American autumn. Storms are sure to come, however, and storms bring rain, and the winter follows the autumn.

"Nancy," said Tom, "we can't stop to put up a house jest now; thar ain't time. We'll hev to start with a pole-shelter."

"That'll do first rate; but I do wish we was nigher to a spring. That thar water-hole looks as if it mought go clean dry in summer," remarked his wife.

"Reckon not. Leastwise it'll do till summer comes. We don't call for much water, no how."

There was some truth in that; but in after-time Tom was to spend many a weary day's work sinking unproductive holes in that neighborhood in a vain search for a well. He had done better if he had camped nearer a spring in the first place.

As he said, the building of a log-house was no small affair, while a large-sized "hunter's camp" could be put up in a hurry. Four fork-tipped uprights at the corners, those in the rear a little the longer, with strong "poles," or trunks of young trees, laid upon them, answered for the frame. Against these an abundance of other "poles" could be leaned and fastened, and the roof could be put on in corresponding style, with slabs of bark to shed the rain until shingles could be cut. For housekeeping purposes a fireplace and chimney of tempered



clay and sticks was all any settler expected ; and cracks between the poles could also be "chinked" with mud, whether they were perpendicular or horizontal. The earth inclosed was pounded hard to make a floor of it. The household goods were brought in and scattered around the humble dwelling, and little Abe's first home in Indiana was as comfortable as it would ever be. There are many patterns of "pole-shelters," but Tom Lincoln was not the man to waste upon his own any labor not absolutely and immediately demanded by stern necessity.

Thus much having been provided against wind and rain, there was "clearing" to be done before there would be any farm, and Tom took to his ax. The woods around the cabin rang with the strokes of his chopping through what was left of the autumn and all through the winter, except when he was hunting the game required to keep his family from starving, or was absent on some errand to the shore of the Ohio.

There was plenty of fun for little Abe, and with it no small amount of work for him and his mother and sister, as the clearing went on. There were quantities of brushwood, and the like, to be heaped upon the fallen tree-trunks and set on fire. There were rabbits and even wild turkeys to be trapped and brought home in triumph, and the supply of woodchucks was all any boy could ask for. Then, too, he could sometimes go out with his father for deer by day, and by night for the plentiful harvest of raccoons. The latter were not "game," but their skins had a sure market, and were as good as money in payment for anything that was to be bought at the "store" by the river, sixteen miles away.

The winters of Southern Indiana are rarely severe. Old settlers say now that the climate was much milder in the old days, before the forests were cleared away. The "half-faced camp," as people used to call the kind of shelter Tom Lincoln had made, so long as it remained open on one side, answered its purpose very well. It was as good a place to live in, during

most weather, as the old cabin on Knob Creek or the older one on Rock Spring Farm. There was "settler's comfort" to be had even when it rained, in watching the leaks in the roof, to know just where to put on another slab of bark or basswood shingle when the weather should clear.

Before spring came again there was enough of land around the cabin, chopped clear of trees, to admit the planting of a patch of corn and potatoes between the stumps. There was no use in spending hard work on any kind of fence for that many-sided field. The deer would have jumped over it, if made; the 'coons and squirrels would have climbed it; and the few pigs Tom had been able to gather preferred to hunt a better living in the woods.

Except for the company of his sister, little Abe's first year in the wilderness was a lonely one. There was no neighbor for miles and miles. In one direction lay Big Pigeon Creek, and in another Little Pigeon Creek, afterwards called "Prairie Fork." Abe knew there were other settlements off there somewhere, and other boys and girls; but all of them had their own woodchucks to dig out, and none came near enough to help him with his. Even berry-picking, in the season of it, was a solitary and monotonous business, unless a bear chose to show himself among the bushes, or a gang of deer came out through the trees to be looked at.

Abe's legs grew longer and longer that year, just from having to travel so far for everything; and all the while the gloom and silence and awe of the great, solemn forest was settling upon his childish heart, and teaching him deep lessons, too deep for him then to understand. He had no other teachers that year.

As soon as hoeing time was over and the growing crops could be left to take care of themselves, there was a great work on hand. Nothing less than the building of a solid, full-grown, heavy-log house.

Tom Lincoln's natural aversion to needless work forbade



him doing more for his logs than to cut them to right lengths and notch them for placing, before, with such help as he could get, they were rolled and hoisted into their places. They wore all their bark after they were in the walls, and that was no more than was customary. Then, too, the holes left for the window-sashes, which might some day be put in, were just as well without for the present, in Tom's opinion. Light and air would enter the cabin through them unhindered. So they would through the open doorway, in which no door was made to swing. The earth on which the house was built, when pounded hard, would once more, as in the pole-shelter, answer all the known purposes of a floor, so long as no pigs should be permitted to tear it up with their noses.

The log-house was a great improvement on the "camp," and it was hardly ready to move into before there were new-comers ready to occupy the hovel the Lincoln family moved out of.

Indiana had now become a State, with a population of about 65,000, and a great tide of immigration was beginning to pour in. On the very first wave of it, in the autumn of the year 1817, came relatives of the Lincolns, for Mrs. Betsy Sparrow was an aunt of Tom's wife, Nancy, and had cared for her in her childhood. With her came her husband, Thomas Sparrow, and a nephew of hers, the same little Dennis Hanks who had been Abe's playmate on Knob Creek.

The Lincoln settlement was sadly in need of neighbors, and the new settlers were welcomed. The Sparrows made their nest in the deserted pole-shelter, and now Abe and his sister had somebody to keep them company in the woods, and another house near enough to go to. Dennis was as fond of all manner of fun as was Abe himself, but there was no other resemblance between them.

The Sparrows were every shade as poor as the Lincolns; and as for the latter, it is matter of record that their new log-house contained neither chair, nor table, nor bedstead, other than such rough affairs as could be made by Tom himself from the

trees he cut down in the woods around him. The cooking, such as it was, was done before the open fireplace, with the help of one tin oven "with a lid;" one skillet, which also had a lid; a few tin dishes, and an earthen pot or so. But then hot coals could be raked out to broil steaks of venison or bear-meat; in the ashes potatoes could be roasted, or chestnuts; and in the season of green corn as many roasting-ears could be eaten as the children should choose to gather.

There was no hardship in all that part of frontier house-keeping, and little Abe did not feel the absence of knives and forks and table-cloths and a host of other luxuries which as yet he did not know by name. The earthen floor grew dry and hard and did not require any carpet. It would never fade or wear out. Truly it is wonderful how few are the things which cannot be dispensed with, and the red Indians, time out of mind, had managed very much after the manner of the white settlers who were now so steadily driving them out of their ancient hunting-grounds.

When the month of February came again, in the following winter, Abraham Lincoln was nine years old, and as tall as most boys of eleven or twelve. He could outrun any boy of his size among the old settlers or among the new families that were now coming in and scattering their cabins, here and there, through all the woods. He could handle an ax pretty well, and was a fair shot with a rifle, although that was the one backwoods art in which he never made himself perfect. He could hit a mark, living or otherwise, but there was no great accuracy in his marksmanship.

It was well for him and his sister that they were now old and strong enough to take some care of themselves, for they were very soon to have that to do. The spring of 1818 went by without anything especial to mark it, but trouble came with the heats of summer.

From that day to this, the scourge known among the people as "the milk-sick" has appeared locally, at longer or shorter

intervals, and its cause and nature are said to be almost as much a mystery now as they were then. Learned men have even declared that there is no such disease, and they may be right; but cattle die of it, and so do human beings, in their helpless ignorance. It came that summer, creeping around among the cabins of the settlers, and nobody knew where it came from or how to deal with it. There were no physicians to be had; and perhaps it was as well, since the strange disorder was to baffle science for half a century afterwards. Farms were stripped of their cattle, and men and women lay down to suffer tediously and waste away and die, and small help could be obtained in any form.

Among those who were taken that season were Thomas and Betsy Sparrow, and they and Dennis Hanks had to come over to the log-house to be cared for.

Then Mrs. Nancy Lincoln was taken, and the house became a sort of hospital, with Tom Lincoln to provide for it, and the children to do the cooking and the nursing.

Through the hot, still days of the remaining summer, and through September, the watching and the suffering went on in the lonely log-hut, and not in all that time was there a single visit there of any physician.

There was no possible thing to be done in that or any other cabin through all that region to make matters any easier for the sick or for the well. It was a necessary part of the frontier-life through which Abraham Lincoln was receiving his education and development. He and his sister and their father and little Dennis did what they could, but Tom was often called upon to leave his home for a while. He was the only man in the settlement who knew how to saw logs into rough planks and make them up into coffins, and there was need of a coffin every now and then.

Thomas and Betsy Sparrow died about the first of October, and they were both buried in a knoll in the woods about half a mile northeast of their cabin. On the 5th of October Mrs.

Nancy Lincoln died, and she too was buried on the knoll under the shadows of the forest. About a score of people attended the funeral, but there was no minister present to conduct the simple ceremonies. A few months later a traveling preacher named David Elkin preached a funeral sermon, but to this day there is no stone to mark the last resting-place of the body of Nancy Lincoln. The simple fact requires no word of comment or interpretation.

The log-house was now no longer a hospital; it was only a desolate and lonely place where Tom Lincoln and his two children and Dennis Hanks could stay and learn all the remaining lessons of utter poverty in the backwoods.

Abe was learning lessons very fast, and more shadows were gathering upon his boyish face.

The change in the manner of housekeeping or in the amount of it was not so great as it might have been in another home than that, and the children could get along after a fashion without any mother. Poor Nancy Lincoln had followed her shiftless husband into the woods, only to die of the mysterious pestilence and to be buried, and soon and altogether forgotten.

## CHAPTER IV.

## A NEW ELEMENT.

Utter Desolation—Arrival of a Good Angel—A Ray of Civilization—1819.

THERE are many things which cannot be done by a ten-year-old boy, a girl of twelve, and a middle-aged backwoodsman. There were no new clothes made that winter for Nancy Lincoln's motherless children, and Tom shifted for his own apparel as best he could.

The spring, the summer, and the autumn of the year 1819 went slowly by. The log-house grew more dirty and more desolate, and Abe and his sister and Dennis Hanks became more and more like a trio of unwashed, uncared-for, and half-naked young savages. It did not seem so much of a hardship during the warmer weather, and there was only now and then a passer-by to make unkind remarks upon the condition of things; but the storms and frosts of winter were surely coming.

Even Tom Lincoln at last awoke to a consciousness that something must be done, and about the first of November the young folk had the cabin all to themselves. Whether or not they knew the nature of Tom's errand to Kentucky, they were left to do their own housekeeping.

There was corn enough and bacon, and some kinds of small fresh meat could be obtained from the woods by a fair degree of boyish industry. Wood was to be had for the chopping, and they need not freeze; and there were the cabins of neighbors to go to now in any dire extremity. Still the hunting of game over frozen ground, and the chopping of logs in the snow, was chilly work for barefooted boys; and the next four weeks

were hard ones, in the course of training through which little Abe was preparing for the unknown trials before him.

The weeks went by, and the snow fell, and the storms whistled through the woods and blew drearily in through the open door and windows of the cabin ; but the children made the best of it.

There came an afternoon in December when a great shout reached their ears from the edge of the clearing. It was Tom Lincoln's voice, and the young housekeepers went out to see.

He had returned, and he had come with a team of four horses and a lumber-wagon laden with some kind of property. There had plainly been a miracle of some sort. It was very nearly one, for Tom had persuaded a respectable widow woman, Mrs. Sally Johnston, of Elizabethtown, Kentucky, to marry him and come to live in his Indiana "home." Her maiden name had been Bush, and before her first marriage Tom had admired her and proposed and been rejected. His present suit had been more successful, and she had only waited so long in order to close up her affairs in Kentucky. The four-horse team was the property of Tom's brother-in-law, Ralph Krume, who had been hired to convey the bride and her household goods to their new abiding-place.

Their new mother was no stranger to Abe and his sister. She had even exhibited an especial liking for Abe in days gone by, and she had now been sent into the wilderness for his benefit as much as for that of his father.

She brought with her a son and two daughters of her own,—John, Sarah, and Matilda,—and with them what to the eyes of her step-children was something like splendor. The wagon contained a fine bureau, a table, a set of chairs, a large clothes-chest, cooking-utensils, knives, forks, bedding, and other articles, the like of which had never before been carried under any roof of Tom Lincoln's.

Mrs. Sally Johnston had been a woman of respectable family and much personal pride, and had been led to expect some-



thing very different from the manifest poverty and squalor now before her eyes. She had been told of a house and a farm, and here they were indeed; but she was Mrs. Lincoln now, and she did not flinch for a moment from the new duties she had undertaken. It was a good deal to the comfortless little ones of poor Nancy Hanks Lincoln that her place should be taken by an old neighbor and a kind one, but they little knew what a blessing had really come to them. Shy, awkward, conscious of the shocking contrast between their own personal appearance and that of the neatly clad children of their new mother, Abe and Sally could hardly offer the new-comers much of a welcome.

It may well be Mrs. Lincoln was aided by the sight of those forlorn little folk in smothering any expression of her disappointment and indignation.

The mute appeal of their misery went to her kind heart overpoweringly. She saw at once that she had a work to do, but there was no prophet to tell her how vast were to be the consequences of that work—that is, of the part of it which stood there in the snow, upheld by the bare, frost-cracked feet of that dirty, ragged ten-years boy with so shy, sad, sensitive a face, trying to smile at her from under his shaggy mop of tangled hair. She told the story of her feelings, years afterwards, with her own lips.

“The poor things!” she exclaimed, as she looked at them. “I’ll make ’em look a little more human.”

The contents of the wagon were transferred to the one room of the cabin, and Mrs. Lincoln’s good work began. She had been a stirring, energetic, self-helpful woman all her life, and she took hold of Tom’s house after a fashion that gave him plenty of work to do. She made him lay a substantial wooden floor over the old one of pounded dirt. She insisted upon having a good door that swung on hinges, and sashes with glass in the hitherto vacant window-holes. Tom was forced to trim up every corner of the house, inside and out, into something like order and decency; and when this was done and the

new furniture was put in place, there was an air of home about it all that had never been there before.

Mrs. Lincoln had brought with her a good store of clothing for her own children, and now she showed no sign of partiality in its distribution. As soon as Abe and Dennis and Sally had undergone the novel sensation of a thorough washing, they were made to know the greater strangeness of being well and warmly clad, and of wearing shoes and stockings in cold weather. No backwoods children, in those days, would have dreamed of any such luxury without a hard frost for an excuse.

It was yet another novelty to have good beds under them, and to lie warm through all the bitter nights, and to feel that the winter was forcibly shut out from pinching them. That was the first shut door they had slept behind for many a long cold night and day.

Abraham Lincoln had received a new mother, and wonderful matters with her. He had suddenly stepped out of misery into a new life. He was clean and clothed and comfortable and well fed, with such a home as he had never known before. Another and a greater thing came dawning in upon the darkness of his stunted life, for he had found some one whom he could love with all his heart, and love her he did, and he was well assured of her love for him. To the end of his life, she was the "mother" to whom his memories went back, although beyond her, in an earlier and darker hour of his morning-time, was the form of his first, his own mother. God is very merciful to children as to all their early troubles and bereavements; and little Abe had been without any mother at all for nearly a year and a half when his father returned from that most profitable trip to Kentucky.

Dennis Hanks and Sally Lincoln shared fairly in all the benefits bestowed. But the latter was never called Nancy any more. Although now there were three of the same name in the united family, Sally she remained to the day of her death.



## CHAPTER V.

## A GENUINE START.

Growth—Schooling—Beginnings of Human Society in the Backwoods.

THERE was a surprise in store for the new mother, and it was by no means an unpleasant one.

As soon as her step-son's bodily wants had been attended to and the house was in order for comfortable living, she set herself at work to discover how much Abe knew, and what. He was willing enough to be "examined;" but who would have expected to find that he had picked up, from the teachings of Nancy Lincoln or during his few weeks of rough schooling in Kentucky, both reading and writing? Not that he could show any marked proficiency in either, but enough to mark him at once as a learner of more than common capacity.

He had learned and he had not forgotten, and he had even made some use of his acquirements; and his new mother determined that it was time he should begin to add to them.

Over on Little Pigeon Creek, a mile and a half from the Lincoln farm, a log schoolhouse had been built by the settlers, near the grand new "meeting-house," also mainly of logs, and the two were witnesses that civilization was breaking through the darkness of the Indiana woods. A man named Hazel Dorsey had been secured as schoolmaster, and it was said of him that he could teach reading and writing and arithmetic. What more could be asked for in the way of scholarship? Little indeed by the bevy of boys and girls who were sent to him by Mrs. Lincoln, with such irregularity as was made compulsory by their many home duties.

The news of their new educational prospects did not bring

the same meaning to all of them, but it was the opening of a wide gate to little Abe. He was growing faster than ever now. Since the new arrivals, filling the log-house to overflowing, he and Dennis had slept in the loft, climbing to it by a ladder of wooden pegs driven into the logs. The bed was a coarse bag filled with corn-husks, and was a narrow one for two such boys. If one turned over, the other had to. And yet there were now three boys in that bed every night, and two of them were beginning to crowd each other in a terrible manner.

First, there was Dennis Hanks, only counting for one boy, then or afterwards; there beside him lay Abraham Lincoln, an uncommonly tall, vigorous body of a boy for his age: and that seemed to be all the bed contained. But inside of Abe was another boy, taller, larger every way, to whom there had now arrived a beginning of almost unlimited "growth."

Nobody could guess how tall that inner boy might yet become, with space to grow in. He had but a vague idea of it, as yet, himself; but it was much that he had any idea at all.

Quickly, silently, night by night and day by day, he determined that he would grow, and his new mother continually and lovingly encouraged him. The two were building better than they knew, and the whole world, for ever and ever, had an interest in Mrs. Lincoln's womanly perception of her step-son's capacity and her unselfish efforts to afford him such opportunities as her narrow means permitted.

The settlement was now a growing one, and the farms were no longer so far apart. A man named Gentry was about to open a country store only a mile and a half, or so, from the Lincolns, and a village would surely gather around it; and the store and village were also to be a school for Abe, but he was to go to Hazel Dorsey's first. His schoolhouse was a queer enough affair. It was just high enough inside for a man to stand up straight in, and the windows were fitted with greased paper instead of glass.

A mile and a half is no great distance to walk to such a school as that, if children have shoes and the snow is not too deep. Reading and writing and the art of "ciphering" were to be walked after, and these were treasures none too common in the cabins of the earlier settlers of Indiana. It is possible that Abe did his walking more easily than the rest; but it is matter of record that before long he could "spell down" all the other scholars of Hazel Dorsey, and could read anything he could lay his hands on.

The first term of study was a short one, for the winter melted rapidly away, and with the coming of settled spring weather the school had to be closed, that teacher and pupils alike might turn their attention to planting corn and potatoes.

The school at the log schoolhouse on Little Pigeon Creek was closed indeed, and would not open again until another winter; but the one which Abraham Lincoln was really attending could not shut its door at all, and the lessons went on at all hours.

In the first place, the body which contained him was growing at such a tremendous rate that he was a man in height before he was fifteen years old, and by the time he passed his seventeenth birthday he was as tall as he ever would be. That is, he stood, barefooted, six feet and four inches of thin and bony awkwardness. It was just such a body, doubtless, as was required for the residence of such a boy as he was. There would never be any great amount of mere polish or elegance about either it or him; but vast stores of natural strength were forming in both, capable of undergoing severe training for the work before them.

Good Mrs. Lincoln very soon despaired of keeping Abraham in clothes that would fit him. It was not so much that he wore things out too rapidly, as that he grew out of and away from whatever she could put upon him. There was yet another difficulty. Cloth of any kind was scarce and dear, and a great part of any boy's apparel had to be made of buckskin,

and that is a material which can hardly cease to shrink and shrivel. So, while Abe's long legs were continually lengthening, his buckskin trowsers were continually diminishing, from day to day, in their capacity for holding or covering the legs they were provided for. However loose they might be when made, a few wettings in dewy corn-fields and rainy woods, or in fording the creeks and sloughs, would surely produce a tighter fit than any tailor could plan.

Stockings were out of the question at any time; and when, on special occasions or in cold weather, the luxury of shoes was to be indulged in, these were always of a low-quartered leather-saving pattern. All shoemaking among the settlers was done at home or by some neighbor who had picked up enough of the cobbler's art to put together such materials as might be brought to him.

There was apt to be an ample length of bare blue ankles between the lower border of Abe's tight buckskins and the tops of his home-made shoes; and this was a peculiarity of his wardrobe which clung to him for years and years. Nevertheless, except for growing out of it so fast and so far, he did not differ much in his apparel from any other boy among the settlers near Little Pigeon Creek. Some of the very latest arrivals might wear for a season the garments they came in, but in due course of wear and tear these were sure to be replaced by the regular backwoods uniform.

The boys were somewhat worse off than the girls with reference to clothing, for a gown of linsey-woolsey or of homespun jeans, no matter how skimp its pattern or how high its waist might be, could be provided with "tucks" to let out, from time to time, like the reefs of a sail. The forest maidens, however, were as independent as their brothers in the matter of shoes and stockings. Strict economy required that, in all good weather and in some that was a little bad, a young lady going to meeting or to an evening party should carry her shoes in her hand until near her destination. It was even expected that

if, in the course of an evening, there should be over-much dancing performed, she should take them off again, lest a good pair of shoes should be wasted frivolously.

Social features were steadily increasing in number and importance, now there were so many neighbors within a few miles of Mr. Gentry's store. The beginning of a village had been fairly made, and religious meetings of several kinds, and parties and merry-makings of a great many kinds, broke rapidly in upon the old-time monotony of frontier life. The woods had ceased to be a wilderness.

## CHAPTER VI.

## BORROWED TREASURES.

The Art of Story-Telling—The Wonders in Books—The Uses of Written Words.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN was just the kind of boy to speedily make the acquaintance of every new family as soon as he heard of its arrival.

It was not only that he was of an eminently sociable disposition. His few weeks of training under Hazel Dorsey had once more brought to his mind a great and mysterious fact of human life, and its meaning was taking feverish possession of him. There were books!

He had seen a very few, and knew but little about the manner of their making; and even less definite were his ideas of what might be in them. There was something weird and wonderful in their very existence, and there was no telling what wonder of a book a new family might own and bring with them. He already knew of men who had brought whole libraries; two, three, four, perhaps half a dozen books gathered under one roof. It was worth while to walk a few miles, and then to talk around and bear a helping hand at chopping or something, to make acquaintance with human beings from whom such a treasure as a bound volume might perhaps be afterwards borrowed.

The unprinted learning of the backwoods, fact and fiction, history and humor, travels from memory to memory by word of mouth. Abe already knew and could tell more stories of all sorts than any other scholar of Hazel Dorsey; but he came home one day from a borrowing expedition with a book that could beat him completely. He had found a copy of *Æsops'*



Fables, and he was to learn from it how to put sharp points to his stories, at need, and make invaluable weapons of them. Before he had read that book through more than a score of times, he could make over into an arrowy "fable," with a moral of some kind or a sting at the end of it, almost any anecdote or incident with which his memory was stored, and Æsop had been his schoolmaster in the subtle art of doing it well.

A good story-teller was an important public acquisition, and Abe's popularity was assured in all the wide and growing circle of his acquaintances.

The Fables were a borrowed book, and had to be returned in time; but before long their place was filled by a story-teller of a very different kind, sure to leave behind him an equally indelible mark on the mind of his young reader.

Abe's new prize came near getting him into disgrace for neglecting his share of the growing corn. How could a boy do justice to a corn-field with such a treat awaiting him in his mother's cupboard at the house?

An English tinker had written it: a low fellow who spent many years of his life in jail for using his tongue too freely. His name was John Bunyan, and he could hardly have been poorer if he had settled in Indiana before it became a State. Still, he had written the "Pilgrim's Progress," and Abe Lincoln had now borrowed a stray copy of it. Before that book went home, Abe knew it almost by heart. It was impossible to do that without learning a great deal, even if a dull and unimpressible boy had been the learner; and the lessons taught by Bunyan through that marvelous pilgrimage were the very lessons Abe Lincoln's education thus far had left him in need of. All the life around him, from his cradle, had been and still was coarse, rude, earthy, sensuous, to the last degree sordid and unspiritual.

Other books turned up here and there, and the family Bible at home was an unfailing resource to Abe for everything but theology.

The summer and fall went by and winter came, but no school came with it. For some reason Hazel Dorsey failed to gather again his scattered pupils, and it was a full year more before the little log seminary could renew its usefulness. Then came a new teacher with many new ways. Mr. Andrew Crawford saw at once that the young people who came trooping around him were in need of other things as well as reading and writing, or even arithmetic. His own scholarship was equal to reasonable demands, and he could carry them as far as the "rule of three," but he could appease no hunger for any higher mathematics. Such merely ornamental branches as grammar and geography were not insisted on by the parents who employed him, but he was willing to add, of his own free gift, other and valuable instruction. From the outset he began to teach them "manners," and no such thing had been heard of before in all that settlement. Every pupil was taught and drilled in the proper method of getting into a room and getting out of it, with all the kindred niceties of making introductions and acquaintanceships. There was abundant fun in it for the boys and girls; and the next best thing to that was Mr. Crawford's great attention to the correctness of their spelling.

It was not long before Abe's book-training began to show its fruits. He was acknowledged to be the leader of the school in the matter of putting together the right letters to make up a word. He became, in fact, a sort of good-natured walking dictionary for the rest, and it was at times needful to turn so willing a prompter out of doors during contested matches or perplexing recitations.

One day the spelling-class embraced nearly the entire school, and Abe had been duly turned out, after a terrific threat from Mr. Crawford that he would keep his victims there all night if they failed to give the correct spelling of the hard word "defied." There was indeed work before a mob of young people every soul of whom was possessed with a conviction that the verbal



stumbling-block had a "y" in it. All around the class it went, and half-way around again but just as it reached a favorite of his named Polly Roby, there was Abe's head at the open window behind the master, with a finger in one eye and a suggestive wink in the other.

Polly's quick wits caught the hint; the awful word was conquered in a second, and Andrew Crawford was sure there had been no unfair assistance given by Abraham Lincoln.

There was one other department of that primitive schooling in which Abe stood all alone. He was the only scholar who insisted on turning his writing-lessons into any kind of "compositions." It was altogether out of Andrew Crawford's line and beyond him. He would not have done any such thing himself, and he would not encourage in wild literary extravagance a lot of children whose life-business was to be the raising of corn and the making of pork. Perhaps even Abe might not have undertaken it so very early if he had not found a work of common humanity calling for the use of his pen.

There was not an animal in the woods for which he had not a kindly feeling. Even the woodchucks he dug out of their holes were in a manner his neighbors, and the land-turtles got out of his way, so far as any danger to them was concerned, mainly because he might carelessly step on them with his immense feet. The other boys were not by any means so tender-hearted, and a terrapin marching away from some of them with a live coal on his back offered a fine subject to Abe for an essay upon "Cruelty to Animals."

It was first given orally to the young savages who were maltreating the helpless terrapin. Then it came out in slowly written sentences in Abe's copy-book. Then it grew and widened into a full-sized "composition," and Abe's career as a writer had fairly begun. He had learned to spell words, and now he had discovered for himself the great art of making them stand in effective order upon paper. Still, paper was scarce, and it was necessary to be exceedingly economical in

the use of it. No word could go down upon such precious material until the writer felt very sure it was the best one he could use in that place, and no more could be employed than were needed to do the work in hand and express the exact meaning intended. The scarcity of paper, therefore, was itself an excellent teacher, continually forcing the young essayist to avoid the most common fault of all writers, trained and untrained.

There were ways to be invented, however, of overcoming the paper difficulty, in part, and of still obtaining an idea of how any given sentence would look in written characters. There was the great wooden shovel in the chimney-corner every night. The surface of it could be shaved clean with his father's "drawing-knife," and then, by the light of the fire, aided by that of a small torch of hickory or birch bark, the whole face of the shovel could be covered with figures and letters. By day and out of doors a basswood shingle would answer the same purpose, with a piece of charcoal for a crayon. A matter could be written and rewritten, and anything pronounced worthy of preservation could be carefully transferred with pen and ink to the pages of an old blank-book which was one of Abe's choicest treasures. Not all the contents of that miscellaneous collection were original, for it contained also copious quotations from every volume its owner managed to borrow.

More of these were now coming within reach, from time to time. Some of the books themselves were a kind of human being. No other settler came into that neighborhood in all those days who was more a real man, come to a real new country, than was Robinson Crusoe, and Abe learned most thoroughly all the ingenious methods of that wonderful cast-away in dealing with dangers and difficulties.

Blackhawk and his warriors were only a few days' march northwestward, and, although there was no "man Friday" to be obtained among them, the print of a moccasined foot in the

mud would still have been a thing to cause alarm and astonishment, if found.

Yet another good arrival brought with him a "History of the United States," and this afforded abundant employment for the fire-shovel and the scrap-book.

There were other wonders of literature which were not to be borrowed, but to be read by the friendly light of the fireplaces from which they could not be carried away. Among these was a small book which told of more wonderful achievements than even the History, for it was Sindbad the Sailor's own account of his perilous voyages.

There was teaching in that book of a specially important nature, for it told of lands and peoples heretofore not so much as dreamed of by the overgrown stepson of Mrs. Sally Lincoln. It helped Robinson Crusoe to make the world wider for him; and when spring came and there were grass and dry leaves in the woods to lie down upon, he could loaf under the trees and dream of ships and oceans and far-away countries where all things were so different from the life he had known in Kentucky and Indiana.

He was now fifteen years old, and of course he had heard of George Washington. He knew by oral traditions, vague and fragmentary, that the Father of his Country had at one time lived in the backwoods and had fought hard battles with the Indians. His delight was great, therefore, when one day old Josiah Crawford, the crustiest of his neighbors, consented to let him carry home a copy of Weems's "Life of Washington." It was a small, thin book in a sheepskin cover, but no other or greater biographer has ever dealt with the deeds of any hero in a spirit of more exuberant enthusiasm. It was slow, intense, instructive reading. Each page had to be dwelt upon and gone over and over, and there were copious notes to be made on wood and copied into the scrap-book. Bedtime was a hateful intruder upon such delight as that, and it was hard to be forced away from it and compelled to lift himself, peg by peg, into

the dark loft above, and separated even from the very paper and binding.

Night after night, with special care, the book was deposited upon a little shelf against the wall of the room below. There were two stout pegs in the log, and a shingle laid across them made the shelf. The book should have been in safety there, if anywhere. It was a pity, however, that Abe should have failed to examine the mud "chinking" of those logs, for it had fallen out just above the shelf, leaving a crack which was full of peril to literature. There came a night, when he and Dennis Hanks were sound asleep, that was full of wind and rain. Gust after gust drove in the flying water through the cranny in the wall, and the shelf was flooded and the precious book was drowned.

When morning came, there lay the soaked and ruined relics of the only "Life of Washington" in all that part of Indiana. It was of little use to dry the leaves in the sun. Abe did so with sorrowful care, and then he bore them home to their owner; but old Josiah refused to receive them.

"Reckon I'll have to make it good somehow," said Abe, mournfully. "What's it wuth?"

"Seventy-five cents; and I don't know whar I'll git another."

He might as well have said seventy-five thousand, and Abe very frankly told him so.

"Well, Abe," said old Josiah, at last, "seein' it's you, I tell ye what I'll do. You pull fodder for me three days, at twenty-five cents a day, and I'll call it squar."

"I'll do it, and I'll jest keep what thar is left of the book."

It had been a well-thumbed, dog's-eared affair, and Crawford had sold it to Abe, after this fashion, at a remarkably high price. So high, in fact, that Abe's remorse did not prevent his sense of justice from rebelling even while he consented to come and pull the fodder. He and Josiah Crawford were never more good friends, and more than a little good-tempered "getting even" had to be performed for a long time afterwards.

## CHAPTER VII.

## FRONTIER TRAINING.

Oratorical Beginnings—Frontier Politics—Hiring Out—A Wedding and a Funeral—Studies among Plain People—A Glimpse into Law.

Now that there were so many settlers, the religious gatherings at the Little Pigeon Creek meeting-house became more frequent. Whenever there was preaching of any kind, Mrs. Sally Lincoln was sure to go, and to insist on taking her husband with her. It made small difference to Tom, indeed, to what sect the preacher of the day might belong. He himself had been, in his day, a member of several sects, and not a very shining ornament to either of them. No change whatever was required when he moved from one into another.

The young people were frequently left at home; but they had preaching among them nevertheless, albeit with more of rough fun than profitable doctrine in the sermons. No sooner were their elders out of sight among the trees than the family Bible would come down from its shelf, and Abe knew its contents quite well enough to find any text he wanted.

"Now, girls," he would say, "you and John and Dennis do the cryin'. I'll do the preachin'."

A hymn or so was given out and sung, and the sermon was only too likely to be a taking off of the style and eccentricities of some traveling exhorter they had heard at the meeting-house. Not always, indeed; for Abe once preached a sermon, on his favorite theme of "cruelty to animals," which was remembered for many years by one little girl, a neighbor, who was that day a member of his childish congregation.

The born orator within him was coming to the surface, and

preaching in the house on Sundays led very naturally to stump-speaking in the fields on other days in times of political excitement. Abe began his training in that school before he was sixteen years old. He advanced so rapidly that before long he could draw the hands in a corn-field away from their husking at any moment by the droll originality of his boyish addresses.

It was a positive relief to a young fellow who was thinking so much and so hard to talk out some part of his internal fermentation. Political affairs occupied a large share of the thoughts and conversations of the Pigeon Creek people, and were attended to from house to house as the best possible excuse for a visit and chat.

A whole family could go over and make a call upon another family, and visitors were always welcome. There was the freest hospitality. If there were not chairs and benches enough, the floor was an excellent place for man or woman to sit down upon. If apples were scarce, or if the supply had given out, a plate of raw potatoes or turnips, nicely washed, could be offered instead, with a bottle of whisky: and there was the very soul of liberality in the offering.

There was one feature of frontier hospitality, indeed, to which Abraham Lincoln never at any time took kindly. He could not bring himself to the use of any description of intoxicating liquor, and in due time he both spoke and wrote against what he perceived to be a social curse and scourge. Such a body as his might perhaps have been persuaded to accept the common custom, but the clear common-sense of his inner boy rebelled and prevented him from acquiring a taste for anything containing alcohol.

Body and mind, he was now growing with tremendous rapidity; but the lessons he was receiving did not come by way of any professional school-teacher after he triumphed over "manners" and the spelling-book under Andrew Crawford.

One lesson of life began with a wedding in the old log-house, when Nancy, or rather Sally, Hanks Lincoln reached her



eighteenth year. It was the merriest day the place had seen since Tom Lincoln halted his tired horses on the knoll and planned his first "pole-shelter." Sally became Mrs. Grigsby, and left her father's cabin to live in that of her husband.

It was not too far away for Abe to make frequent visits to his married sister; but within the year the young bride was removed to a more distant country, and Aaron Grigsby was a widower.

Abraham was now the sole remaining child of Mrs. Nancy Hanks Lincoln, but he was as a favorite son to his loving step-mother. The shadows grew deeper upon his queer, strongly marked face whenever it was in repose, but there was somewhat less of that than formerly. The great sociability of his nature was called into more frequent activity as time went on. His love of fun and his peculiar capacity for making it rendered him a welcome visitor throughout the scattered settlement. He was liked by all women old and young for his kindness, and he was the most popular of all the idlers who strolled from their cabins and corn-fields into what had now become the village of Gentryville. Idling, in fact, at all seasons when no work is pressing, is one of the fixed institutions of a new country, and this may in part be owing to the amount and nature of the compulsory hard work.

As for Tom Lincoln, the older he grew the stronger became his tendency to shift the drudgeries of his farm upon Abe and John Johnston and Dennis Hanks, but his thrifty and stirring wife insisted that the work should be done by some one. Abe did his duty by her, as she affectionately boasted in after-years, but he was now developing a strong preference for working upon any other piece of ground than the Lincoln farm. He chose to hire himself out to other farmers for any kind of labor, even if his father got most of the benefit by receiving his wages for him. His services were always in request. He could chop more wood, handle more hay, husk more corn, and lift a heavier weight than any other young fellow to be had

for the hiring, and he was perpetually good-humored and obliging. He was a favorite with all children, and their mothers liked to have around the house a "hand" who, after his field-work was over, was equally ready to 'tend baby, go for a bucket of water, tell a story, or recite any required amount of poetry. His memory held everything tenaciously and in condition for instant use. It was stored not only with the miscellaneous contents of his scrap-book and with such passages of prose or verse as had impressed him in his reading, but also with every telling jingle he had heard. If he went to meeting, he could afterwards repeat the sermon almost word for word. The very narrowness of his singular course of study had put his naturally good memory into excellent training, and he did not as yet know so many things, acquired either by sight or hearing, that his mind had not ample space and elbow-room for all of them.

From house to house and from farm to farm the tall strippling went the rounds as he might be hired, little thinking or caring how thorough a knowledge he was by that means obtaining of the character of the different classes of people who were filling up the great West. He could but study them unconsciously as he went and came, and he was learning more about them than some of them knew about themselves. He knew from whence they had emigrated, and how people lived in those distant communities. He became familiar with habits, prejudices, superstitions, religious beliefs, political ideas, social distinctions, varied hopes and fears, and aspirations and disappointments. He learned, too, somewhat of different nationalities and the races of which these settlers were born or had descended, and to what extent they had become intelligent members of a self-governing community.

He could not know at the time through what a school he was passing, but every step of his after-life proved that not any of those hard lessons-by-the-way, so useless to another man, had been wasted upon him. There was no manner of miracle



in his intimate knowledge of the thoughts and ways and feelings of "the plain people."

He began now to seek and find drier and more difficult studies. A friend of his named David Turnham had been made "acting constable" of the settlement, and had purchased a copy of the "Revised Statutes of Indiana" to guide him in the duties of his office. David was firm in the idea that a constable should always have his printed instructions at hand for reference, and the book was not to be borrowed, but Abe was welcome to come to the owner's house and read the laws. It was very different reading from Robinson Crusoe or Weems's Washington, but it was pored over none the less persistently. Abraham Lincoln was beginning his legal studies, but with only a faint conception of what a lawyer might be. Getting law from such a book as that was something like getting wheat-flour or corn-meal from a horse-mill, such as they all resorted to on Pigeon Creek. There was but one within reach; and when a farmer went to it with a load of grain, he set his own horses at the work of turning the mill when his turn came. A full day's hard toil turned out about fifteen bushels, without any "bolting." All that kind of finishing was to be done at home. Still, it was better than a mere hand-mill, as that had been an improvement on the primitive mortar and pestle. Some of Abe's law-study, indeed, must more have resembled the work of the mortar and pestle, and all results were much like the flour from the horse-mill. A kind of learning was in them, but all unsifted, and his strong memory retained the veriest "bran" of the statutes of Indiana.

Abe was less and less at home nowadays, but his loving stepmother by no means lost sight of him. She had strong hopes and convictions concerning his future, and she encouraged him continually. She well deserved the hearty affection with which he accepted her entirely as his "mother." He gave her so much and so steadily, through all that time, that when, many long years afterwards, her great, gloomy, fun-lov-

ing boy had lived out his useful life, and a whole people stood in tears around his coffin, she was able to say, between her own sobs, that he never gave her an unkind word or look or one solitary act of disobedience.

So it was a woman, and a "mother," who gave him his most important help during those his earlier school-days, and to whom he was most largely indebted for the good use of all the rest. His development could not have been the same with her good work omitted.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## BOY-OF-ALL-WORK.

Toil, Fun and Frolic—Books and Speaking Matches—A Severe Lesson in Caste—Practical Teachings on Temperance—1825.

THE Lincoln cabin was a small one. So large a family could hardly make themselves comfortable in one room and a loft, now that its younger members were so fast growing towards maturity. The farm, too, was limited in its capacity, and so there were reasons why Abe was permitted to have his own way in the matter of "working out." His longest hiring at any one place began in the year 1825, when he went to work for James Taylor, who owned the ferry across the Ohio River, at the mouth of Anderson's Creek. There were books to be had at Taylor's, and new ideas were to be picked up from the people of all sorts who from time to time were passengers in the rude ferryboat.

There were duties for Abe in great abundance, for he was man-of-all-work about the house and farm. Perhaps the most distasteful of all was grinding corn in a hand-mill, or grating the green ears for Mrs. Taylor's cookery. His hatred of cruelty to animals did not at all stand in the way of his being a good hand at butchering hogs in "killing time." His feelings, however, or his books, or his many industries, or all combined, prevented him from forming any taste for hunting. Game was so plentiful that the smaller varieties were a pest to the farmers. They were slaughtered to get rid of them, rather than for the table. Deer, bears, wild turkeys, were made to be eaten, and formed an important part of any man's calculations for his supply of provisions for the year. Wild-

cats and even panthers were still sufficiently numerous to render uncomfortable at times the idea of lonely walks after nightfall.

It was a wild country if judged by standards accepted in older communities, but a change was creeping over the ways and manners of the Gentryville and Pigeon Creek settlers. They were becoming somewhat crowded by each other. Here and there were farms whose borders actually touched, and there was much more fencing required than in former days. There was greater sociability, of course, and there were larger gatherings at the meeting-house on Sundays. Right along with these, in growing size and frequency, came the corn-shuckings, log-rollings, chopping-bees, shooting-matches, dances, and other contrivances for getting the neighbors together for a frolic.

Abraham Lincoln was not the boy to willingly miss a frolic of any kind, and as a general thing he was pretty sure of invitations, for he had faculties and accomplishments which were in demand. To his old-time capacity as a story-teller he was now adding a turn for satire and travesty, which now and then got him into difficulties, for his love of fun forbade him to spare anything worth taking off, and his reverence was as yet an undeveloped part of his character. Even in carefully listening to a sermon, he was too apt to remember with it every oddity and eccentricity of the preacher, and the whole would soon be reproduced, with ludicrous precision of gesture and intonation, before the uproarious congregations at the merry-makings. There was only too much that was odd and even grotesque in the frontier preaching of that day, good and useful as were some of the preachers, and the irreverent mimic had ample matter for his performances.

From reciting the poetry of others there was but a step to an attempt at manufacturing verses on his own account. It was not long before the ambitious boy of all work and devourer of all books made for himself a local reputation as a

rhymster. Almost any story, or any satirical attack upon an obnoxious neighbor, could be given a better point or a sharper sting by being thrown into the shape of a rude but jingling ballad. It was easy enough, moreover, to secure an attentive audience for that kind of "border minstrelsy."

Excepting religious services and funerals, there could hardly be a gathering of such a population without a part of the entertainment consisting of trials of bodily strength and skill among the younger and even the middle-aged men. Into these Abe entered with enthusiasm. There were many who could beat him with the rifle, but it began to be discovered that as he attained his full size, and his tough muscles filled out a little upon his bony frame, the rivals were fewer and fewer who could hope to excel him at wrestling, jumping, throwing the "maul" or heavy hammer, or in lifting a dead weight.

Physical power was of value for many reasons. The men upon whom his wit turned the laugh were not always contented to let the matter pass as a joke; but even the readiest of rough-and-tumble fighters was less prompt to quarrel with a young fellow who could laughingly pick up three or four times his weight and walk off with it. Nevertheless, every now and then, and even when trying to act as a peacemaker, Abe was sure to find a fight on his hands. The cheapness and abundance of whisky was generally at the bottom of such troubles; and they served him a good turn, by impressing him more and more deeply with the fact, then generally ignored, that a drinking or drunken man has little prospect of success in any competition with one who is wise enough to let drink alone. Frolic as much as he might, and be never so popular at all merry-makings, his somber and serious "inner man" was master always, and sure to keep him steady. As for mere trials of strength, even if forced upon him by the anger of others, they did but help him to acquire an exhaustless fund of confidence in his ability to pull himself and his friends safely through any difficulty which might be brought upon them.

More books were coming now. A man named Jones opened an opposition store at Gentryville, and he took a personal liking to Abe Lincoln. Apart from mere friendship, he saw that so popular a youngster could not fail to attract customers, and so, for a time that sufficed for reading every book owned by Mr. Jones, Abe acted as a sort of clerk and salesman for him. He kept no books of account and did not acquire the finer mysteries of merchandise; but he could pack and unpack goods, attend to customers, crack jokes with idlers, keep the place looking busy, and increase his peculiar knowledge of the world he was to live in. It was every way as valuable to him, as a piece of schooling, as would have been another winter term under Andrew Crawford.

During this part of his motley education Abe made himself the star orator of the Gentryville "speaking-matches." These were carried on in a rude kind of debating club, and the range of topics discussed was a wide one. Both the consciousness and the love of oratorical power began to grow strong within him. At the same time he was thirsting for a deeper knowledge of law and justice than could be sifted from the Revised Statutes of Indiana.

The county-seat of Warrick County was but fifteen miles from Gentryville. Courts were held there at certain seasons of the year, and judges sat to hear causes, and juries listened to testimony and arguments and rendered verdicts.

There, too, men were tried for crimes, and some received the penalty of their evil deeds. Others, again, came forth free and in a manner distinguished, with the thrilling story of their trial and escape to tell ever afterwards, as the choicest bit of frontier history known to them. It was no small thing for any man that he had been actually tried and acquitted of something serious, and he took a kind of rank proportioned to the magnitude and peril of his ordeal.

A little walk of fifteen miles in the early morning, and with no more to walk in returning after nightfall, could hardly in-



terfere with the attendance at court of a student combining Abe's length of limb with his eagerness for law. He was sure to be among the audience in the court-room whenever he could escape from other duties. Not the judge himself, nor any jury, attended more zealously the fortunes of every case he heard.

One day a man was on trial for murder, and had secured for his defence a lawyer of more than common ability named John Breckinridge. Abraham Lincoln had been exceedingly interested in the case from the beginning; but when the time came for the prisoner's counsel to speak in his defence, there was a surprise prepared for the young Gentryville debater. He had never, until that day, listened to a really good argument, delivered by a man of learning and eloquence, but he had prepared himself to know and profit by such an experience when it came to him. He listened as if he had himself been the prisoner whose life depended upon the success of Mr. Breckinridge in persuading the jury of his innocence.

Other juries, long afterwards, were to learn how profound and successful had been the study the rough backwoods boy was then giving to the great art of persuading the minds of men. Millions of his fellow-citizens were to bear witness to the capacity he was then developing of so uttering a thought that those who heard or read the utterance could never afterwards tear that thought out of their memories.

Abraham Lincoln learned much from the great speech; but he had yet a deep and bitter lesson to receive that day. The lines of social caste were somewhat rigidly drawn at that time. A leading lawyer of good family like Mr. Breckinridge was a "gentleman," and a species of great man not to be carelessly addressed by half-clad boors from the new settlements.

Abe forgot all that; perhaps not knowing it very well. He could not repress his enthusiasm over that magnificent appeal to the judge and jury. The last sentence of the speech had hardly died away before he was pushing through the throng

towards the gifted orator. Mr. Breckinridge was walking grandly out of the court-room, when there stood in his path a gigantic, solemn-visaged, beardless clodhopper, reaching out a long coatless arm, with an immense hard hand at the end of it, while an agitated voice expressed the heartiest commendation of the ability and eloquence of his plea for his client.

Breckinridge was a small-souled man in spite of his mental power and his training, for he did but glance in proud amazement at the shabby, presumptuous boy, and then pass stupidly on without speaking. He had imparted priceless instruction to a fellow who had yet but a faint perception of the artificial barriers before him.

The two met again, at the city of Washington, in the year 1862, under other circumstances, and then the President of the United States again complimented Mr. Breckinridge upon the excellence of his speech in the Indiana murder-case.

The precise information conveyed to Abe, whether or not he mentally put it into form, was that he was a "poor white" and of no account; a species of human trash to whom the respect due to all recognized manhood did not belong. He forgave the man who told him what he was, but he never ceased to profit by the stinging, wholesome information.

It was but a little while afterwards, while he was temporarily employed by old Josiah Crawford, and when he had worried good Mrs. Crawford overmuch by the fun and uproar he created in her kitchen, that she asked him,

"Now, Abe, what on earth do you s'pose'll ever become of ye? What'll you be good for if you keep a-goin' on in this way?"

"Well," slowly responded Abe, "I reckon I'm goin' to be President of the United States one of these days."

He said it soberly enough. And that was not the only occasion upon which there fell from his lips some strange, extravagant expression of his inner thought that there was a great work for him to do somewhere in the future. He could plow, chop



wood, 'tend store, do errands, make fun, now ; but he could all the while feel that he was growing, growing, and that this would not last forever. He could feel that the change continually going forward within him could not be with reference to such a life as he was leading, or to such as he saw led by the full-grown and elderly men around him. For him there was, there must be, something more and higher, and he was blindly reaching out after it, day by day ; but all the others deemed him as one of themselves ; better than some, it might be, but very much below any young man whose father could give him a good farm and some hogs and a little ready money.

## CHAPTER IX.

## THE FLATBOAT.

A Trading Voyage—Life in the Southern States—First View of Human Slavery—1828.

ABE LINCOLN had made himself the best known and most popular young fellow in all the region round about Gentryville; but although the whole country liked him, he did not at all like the country. He was now nineteen years of age, but was still subject to his father's authority, and Tom Lincoln was not the man to surrender his legal right to the wages of his stalwart son. All rates for farm-labor were low, however, and there was none too much of it to be sold, at any price, in a community where most men could do all their own work and have ample time left for lounging at neighboring cabins or around the village grocery.

Abe had long since given up the idea of earning a living behind the counter of Jones's store, or any other that he knew of. He was under bonds to his father, but he made an attempt to obtain employment as a boat-hand on the river. His age was against him in his first effort, but his opportunity was coming to him. In the month of March, 1828, he hired himself to Mr. Gentry, the great man of Gentryville. His duties were to be mainly performed at Gentry's Landing, near Rockport, on the Ohio River. There was a great enterprise on foot, or rather in the water, at Gentry's Landing, for a flatboat belonging to the proprietor was loading with bacon and other produce for a trading trip down the Mississippi to New Orleans. She was to be under the command of young Allen Gentry, but would never return to the Ohio, for flatboats are built to go down with the stream and not for pulling against it.

Abe's hour for travel and adventure had at last arrived. He was given the position of "bow-hand," at eight dollars a month and rations, with a paid return-passage home on a steamboat. It was a golden vision indeed, yet not so much for the money as for the grand trip itself.

There was society at the "Landing;" and while the boat was taking on her cargo, her tall bow-hand improved his opportunities.

Miss Roby, whom he had known at Crawford's school, and through whom he had saved the spelling-class from disaster, was deeply interested in the success of that flatboat. Not a great while after the completion of its one voyage she became Mrs. Allen Gentry, and even now she found excuses and occasions for coming on board to chat with the captain and with his queer, fun-loving "crew."

"Abe," she said, late one afternoon, "the sun's going down."

"Reckon not," said Abe. "We're coming up, that's all."

"Don't you s'pose I've got eyes?"

"Reckon so; but it's the earth that goes round. The sun keeps as still as a tree. When we're swung around so we can't see him any more, all the shine's cut off and we call it night."

"Abe, what a fool you are!"

It was all in vain to explain the matter any further. The science of astronomy had not been taught at Crawford's, and was not at all popular in Indiana. Whatever sprinkling of it Abe had found among his books, there was no use in trying to spread its wild vagaries along the banks of the Ohio River. He knew altogether too much for his time, and a mere flatboatman had no business to dispute the visible truth concerning the daily habits of a contrivance so well known as the sun.

The flatboat was cast loose from her moorings in April, and swept away down the river, with Abraham Lincoln as manager of the forward oars. No such craft ever had a longer or stronger pair of arms pledged to keep her blunt nose well directed.

They drifted down the Ohio into the Mississippi, and on down for hundreds of crooked miles, borne swiftly by the muddy, irresistible current. It was a matter both of skill and toil to effect a stoppage at a landing for trading purposes; but the required visits were made from place to place, and the young merchants met with very encouraging success. The worst enemy they had to contend with was counterfeit money, for they were no experts in detecting the quality of either coin or paper. In fact, there was so much more bad money than good in circulation up and down the Mississippi that a withdrawal of all the spurious stuff at any one time would have caused a disastrous contraction of the currency. The all but universal custom was to take what came and to pass it again without inquiry, unless it were too hopelessly defective in its external appearance.

It was a trip full of life-long consequences to Abraham Lincoln. Now again, for the first time since, a mere child, he had emigrated from Kentucky, the budding statesman came in contact with human slavery. He had seen much of what could be done with white men in their degradation by poverty, ignorance, and intemperance. He was now to observe the effect of all these upon black human beings held as property and not regarded as men and women. He was in a fair state of preparation for such a study. Already, with patient care, he had written an essay on Temperance, the publication of which in a country newspaper at a distance had stirred his young ambition to fever heat. He had followed that with another, the leading idea of which was the necessity of general popular education; and this too had been printed. In these he had worked out and presented the results of his studies of human life among his neighbors. He was now to begin his training and preparation for yet other essays which he was to print, and for speeches which he was to deliver, in the great and terrible years that were to come.

He was not to see the sunny side of plantation-life, such as

it was. Slavery came before him in the shape of negroes under the whip, engaged in loading and unloading river craft, or toiling in unpaid drudgery among the hot fields along the banks. He saw negroes chained in coffles, on their way to and from the market, and he saw them bought and sold like cattle in the slave-mart at New Orleans. Only the unpleasant, the brutally offensive features of the black curse were permitted to make their impression upon him, and the brand they left was an ineffaceable scar.

All that was upon his inner boy, indeed, but it was to be in a manner supplemented and represented by a mark in the body he occupied. At the plantation of Madame Bushane, six miles below Baton Rouge, the flatboat was moored for the night against the landing, and the keepers were sound asleep in their little kennel of a cabin. They slept until the sound of stealthy footsteps on the deck aroused Allen Gentry, and he sprang to his feet. There could be no doubt as to the cause of the disturbance. A gang of negroes had boarded the boat for plunder, and they would think lightly enough, now they were discovered, of knocking the two traders on the head and throwing them into the river.

"Bring the guns, Abe!" shouted Allen. "Shoot them!"

The intruders were not to be scared away by even so alarming an outcry; and in an instant more Abe Lincoln was among them, not with a gun but with a serviceable club. They fought well, and one of them gave their tall enemy a wound, the scar of which he carried with him to his grave; but his strength and agility were too much for them. He beat them all off the boat, not killing any one man, but convincing the entire party that they had boarded the wrong "broad-horn."

The trip lasted about three months, going and coming, and in June the two adventurers were at home again, well satisfied with their success. Allen Gentry had profited the more largely in the mere matter of money, but his bow-hand had brought back with him treasures of information; of experience

and education, gathered all the way from the mouth of Anderson's Creek, on the Ohio, to the very borders of the Gulf of Mexico. The whole country and the world itself was yet to be the better and the wiser for Abraham Lincoln's schooling in his slow summer voyage down the Mississippi and up again. Little he then dreamed that he was yet to direct the course of fleets on that same water, of armies along the winding shores, and the sieges of strong forts upon the bluffs and headlands.

His lessons were not all dark ones, doubtless, but the shadows upon his face were deepening with so much to think of, and there was small probability that he would again settle cheerfully down to the dull and empty life of the Little Pigeon Creek neighborhood.

## CHAPTER X.

### "OF ILLINOIS."

Another Migration—Of full Age and Free—Farmhand and Flatboatman—  
More Southern Studies—1830.

RAPIDLY as the young State of Indiana was filling up with sturdy farmers from the older settlements, it was still a very new country. And yet there was a newer and a more wonderful region spread out beyond it. The vast expanse of prairie and forest between the Indiana line and the Mississippi River had been formed into the State of Illinois. Men told marvelous tales of its fertility, and of the ease with which farms could be opened on land where so much and so perfect a clearing had been made by the hand of Nature.

John Hanks, a cousin of the Lincolns, had settled near Decatur, in central Illinois, in 1828, and his letters fired the imagination of Dennis Hanks to such a degree that he talked of little else than prairie-farming. He even made a visit to Illinois, and after his return the question of emigrating or not was as good as settled for the whole family. Dennis had now married the oldest daughter of Abe's good stepmother, and had made a sort of start in life for himself, so that he was in some degree an independent person; but Abe had yet a few short months to wait for manhood and freedom.

There were agencies at work to drive as well as to attract, for the "milk-sick" had appeared again, and was at work with terrible energy upon both beasts and human beings. In spite of that, however, a whole year was consumed in the process of getting away from the old place.

Another daughter of Mrs. Lincoln had married Levi Hall,



and the young couple joined the westward movement. Yet, when land and corn and stock had been sold, one large wagon held all the household stuff of the three families of Hanks, Hall, and Lincoln. They waited until the latter part of the winter of 1830, and Abraham Lincoln became of age but a few days before they set out for Illinois.

A worse time of the year could hardly have been selected for wagoning over western roads, but the choice of it was characteristic of Tom Lincoln. The four yoke of oxen over which Abe held the "gad" were barely sufficient to overcome the unending succession of mudholes, sloughs, and rivers through which the clumsy vehicle had to be hauled. It was an unusually good wagon for those days, although it was the very first Tom Lincoln ever owned, and it held together well.

On the first day of March, 1830, after two weeks of slow and laborious travel, the journey ended at the house of John Hanks near Decatur.

Abraham Lincoln had reached the scenes of his further education, his trials and his triumphs for the thirty years which then lay between him and his highest uses. He would need all the time, and a good use of all his opportunities: and these could hardly be fewer or poorer, nor could the obstacles to be overcome confront him with more insurmountable stubbornness, than those he had left behind him in the fever-haunted woods of Indiana.

Some oppressions, indeed, were now removed. He was twenty-one, and was a free man and a voter. He could come and go as he pleased, and such wages as he might earn would be all his own. Beyond that, however, there was little to be said for him. Trade, profession, manual skill of any special kind, he had none except the coarse arts of the wood-chopper, the boatman, and rough farmer.

He was free, but his first work in Illinois was given to his father, or rather to his well-beloved stepmother; for he joined the other males of the family in building a house on a high

bank of the north fork of the Sangamon River, out of some logs already cut there, and given them for the purpose by John Hanks.

After the new homestead was completed and the family had moved into it, Abe and Dennis plowed up fifteen acres of prairie-land for corn, and split rails enough to fence it in. He had done what he could to leave matters in good shape behind him as he went out to toil for himself. But he severed no tie of affection in his going. To his dying day he never ceased to care for his "mother" and her comfort, and there was no interruption of the full current of her love for him.

It was a great day for Abraham Lincoln when, all present filial duty well performed, he once for all cut himself loose from the heaviest part of the load he had carried for twenty-one long years. The crushing weight of that oppression no man can estimate. Not even if he has studied never so carefully what it is, and then was, to be a "poor white" in a new settlement; for different men take up different weights in the same pack. Young Lincoln himself had but dim and formless perceptions of the truth. Neither he nor any one else could know or comprehend, moreover, the wonderful manner and degree of the gain he had won from his very disadvantages. No one could discern or measure the internal growth, as all could the physical and external; but a giant had been trained and was still in training for a life-long wrestle with opposing forces of every name and nature.

It was about the middle of spring before a beginning could be made in the new career, but from that time forward Abe ceased to make his father's house his home. Except that it contained his mother, it could not be a home for him in any true sense. He never had had one: only a log-shelter to eat and sleep in; while the cattle he drove were better provided for, considering their natures and requirements. The life he had led had shown him the insides of many homes, and the life before him was to do the same: but none of these had been,

and none was to be, his own. There was that in his organism, both as to its plan and size, which almost forbade the idea of his fitting perfectly into any one house or family circle, so that it should be to him much more than a sort of "boarding-house."

He was now not only homeless but penniless, and it was needful that he should make a start somewhere; also that he should begin in the line to which his previous life had accustomed him. His capacity and willingness for hard work at once secured him pretty steady employment. He did not love such drudgery, but he did it faithfully, earning his daily bread under a sort of perpetual protest, and all the while he was winning for himself a local popularity similar to that which he had enjoyed in Indiana. His friends, and even some of his relatives, had a certain amount of faith in him, and were disposed to force him into activity when an occasion offered.

There was a little political excitement in the fall of that year, and the question of the improvement of the Sangamon River for purposes of navigation was a leading topic of debate. There was the usual stump-speaking, of course, and among the orators who traveled through the prairie country on that errand was a man named Posey. He came to Decatur, and he made a speech which so much disgusted John Hanks as to bring from him the remark,

"Mister, I tell ye what: Abe Lincoln can beat that all hollow. Abe, try him on."

A box was turned over for Abe to stand upon, and his career as an Illinois political stump-speaker fairly began. Not only did he beat the speech of Mr. Posey, but he so completely conquered that gentleman that, after the debate was over and when the opponents came together, the vanquished campaigner frankly asked his rough antagonist "where he learned to do it."

Abe replied freely, and even told the nature and extent of his reading, as if he owed his power as an orator in great

measure to his books. A host of mere bookworms could have undeceived him on that point if he could have tested them in attempts to address crowds of miscellaneous hearers. Mr. Posey honestly and earnestly encouraged his queer acquaintance to persevere; but he was quite likely to do that.

The year went by and Abraham Lincoln was still a mere farm-hand, jobbing his strong body to one employer after another. It did not seem that he had climbed a single round of the long ladder of worldly success. But the return of his birthday brought him something new. A man named Denton Offutt hired John Hanks and John Johnston and Abe Lincoln to take a flatboat for him down the Sangamon River all the way from Springfield to New Orleans. He promised them fifty cents a day for the entire trip, with an additional sixty dollars to be divided among them at the end of it. For those times such wages were extraordinary.

The bargain was made in February, and in March the three friends went down the Sangamon from Decatur in a canoe. For some reason they left their boat five miles above the town and walked the rest of the way. They found their employer easily enough, but they also found that he had failed to procure for himself a flatboat for the proposed voyage. If, therefore, they were to go down the river that season they must provide their own shipping. The construction of a flatboat was no formidable affair to men who had been brought up as they had.

They went to the mouth of Spring Creek, five miles north of Springfield, and set to work.

The land they were on and the trees they cut down were still the property of the United States Government, although so near the future capital of the State of Illinois. The logs when cut were rafted down the river, to be sawed into planks at the Sangamontown saw-mill. That work was done in a fortnight, and in two weeks more the industrious trio had their flatboat in the water. All the while they lived in a shanty of their

own making and "boarded themselves." There had been fun along with the hard work, for Abe was the life of the shanty.

There had also been evening strolls into all there was of Sangamontown, and talks, and yarn-spinning, and cracking of jokes with the inhabitants.

Mr. Offutt joined them now, and his cargo was ready for shipment when the flatboat was launched. The State of Illinois at that time raised but little of any other crop than Indian corn, and sent this to market mainly in the shape of pork. The cargo therefore consisted of the favorite grain in both its customary forms, and Mr. Offutt took charge of its management and sale. Very little of it would have reached a southern market, however, if it had not been for the curious ingenuity of the tallest of his three boatmen.

On the 19th of April the boat arrived at New Salem, and at that point there was a mill-dam upon the ridge of which the rude craft floated and stuck fast. Her destruction seemed inevitable, for her stern was sinking, the water was pouring in, and her loose lading was sliding back as the slope of her awkward position increased.

Abe Lincoln at once took command, as if in any time of special trouble the leadership belonged to him. An empty boat was floated alongside, and the cargo was hoisted into it by main strength, until the grounded craft was sufficiently lightened to be set afloat again. Just how he managed to keep her from sinking during that brief period of desperate exertion does not clearly appear.

Before he pulled her off from the dam he rigged some gearing under her stern by means of which she was steadily raised, while the water ran out of her through auger-holes bored in the bottom of the part which hung over the dam. It was Abe's first effort as an inventor, but it set his mind at work in a new direction. Just eight years afterward he sent to the Patent Office at Washington a wooden model, made by him-

self, of a contrivance for floating steamers over bars and other obstructions in the western rivers.

New Salem was a small place on a low bluff, and all its inhabitants came out to watch the fate of the stuck flatboat. Great was the admiration expressed for the skill and energy of the man who saved it. Neither he nor they, however, had any idea that for seven long years that very man would himself be "stuck" and stranded in the odd, grotesque, chance-medley existence of New Salem.

Mr. Offutt's gratitude made him enthusiastic; for he vowed that on his return he would build a steamboat to run on the Sangamon. He would provide her with runners for ice and rollers for shoals and dams; and then, "with Abe Lincoln in command of her, by thunder, she would have to go!"

The remainder of the trip was much like any other flatboat voyage down the Mississippi; but at New Orleans and elsewhere Abe received a repetition of his first lessons on slavery. He again saw negroes manacled for sale, maltreated, beaten, and felt that it was neither safe nor useful to enter any protest. No word could be spoken against an iniquity which all men declared to be a great good, and a necessity of Southern life; but a memory could be recorded and put away in the secret treasure-house of the young flatboatman's heart. The day was to come when he should take it out and put it into words so plain, so clear, so strong, that the minds of a million and a half of voters should receive them as a sort of Gospel.

After that was to come yet another day, when his own hands should be laid upon the manacles, in power, and should shatter them, putting an end forever to the buying and selling of men and women in the United States.

The steamboat passage homewards terminated at St. Louis. From that point, all the way up and across the great State of Illinois, to Coles County, Abe Lincoln and John Johnston traveled on foot, leaving Hanks on the road to make his way to Springfield.



The Lincoln family had moved again during Abe's brief absence, but their Coles County settlement proved a permanent one.

This second experience of river life in the South left the young giant little better off than before in worldly goods, whatever else he may have gained by it. But while he was away his talkative friends had taken good care of his reputation as a man of muscle. They had said so much, indeed, that the champion wrestler of that region, one Daniel Needham, sent him a challenge to a public trial of strength and skill. It was accepted, as a matter of course, and the meeting took place with all the customary prairie formalities; but rarely has a "champion" been more astonished than was Daniel Needham. It was not so much that he was thrown twice in quick succession, but that the thing was done for him with so much apparent ease; and his wrath rose hotly to the fighting point.

"Lincoln," he shouted, "you've thrown me twice, but you can't whip me."

"Needham," said Abe, "are you satisfied I can throw you? Well, if you ain't, and I've got to satisfy you by thrashing you, I'll do that too, for your own good."

The crowd laughed; but the champion gave the matter a sober second thought, and concluded that his own good did not require a mauling from that man. He was entirely satisfied already.



## CHAPTER XI.

## A STEP UPWARD.

Stranded in New Salem—First Public Employment—Miller, Clerk, and Peace-keeper—A Wrestling Match—1831.

THE mill-dam across the Sangamon River, upon the perilous edge of which Mr. Offutt's flatboat stuck, to be rescued by Abraham Lincoln, is still in existence; but the little hamlet of New Salem has long since disappeared. The hand of time requires but little human aid in the destruction of a score or two of houses built of logs or of pine boards, the best of them at a cost of less than a hundred dollars.

New Salem, however, was something of a business place in the summer of the year 1831. The mill was a great help to it, and it was separated by twenty miles of prairie road from the crushing rivalry of Springfield. That city already contained at least a thousand inhabitants, and no neighboring settlement could hope to compete with it successfully.

The whole population of the prairie country was in a condition of continual drift and change, yet hardly any man could offer a good reason for his restlessness. Whole families floated hither and thither, they knew not why and scarcely how, drawing friends and connections after them.

A solitary, loose-footed laborer, without an ounce of property beyond the shabby clothes he stood in, was a fragment of human driftwood which might be cast ashore almost anywhere by the aimless eddies of such a social state.

Abraham Lincoln, hiring from job to job of uncertain work, was stranded at New Salem about midsummer of the year 1831. He had no definite business there, no settled occupation, no

home, no special friends, although there were some who knew him by name. His first employment grew out of the fact that he could write; for that accomplishment was by no means general in New Salem. The "election" was held in August; but when the polls were opened the reception of votes was checked by the sad fact that but one "clerk" was present to record them, while the inexorable law demanded two. Worse than that, a search of the known residents of New Salem failed to discover a second candidate duly educated for the performance of his duties. There was the very tall stranger loitering around. It was not likely that he could use a pen, but they could ask him; and one of the "judges of election" approached him with,

"Mister, kin you write?"

"Well, yes, I reckon I can, a little."

"Will you take a hand as clerk of 'lection to-day?"

"Well, yes, if you want me. I'll try it on. Do the best I can."

It was a curious experience for the stranded stranger. He was performing the first act of his life as a public functionary, and the power and office came to him because he was the one and only man who had the necessary education.

Mr. Denton Offutt had it in his mind to start a country store at New Salem, and Abe was in some hope of employment from him if the intention should be fulfilled: but it was not. Mr. Offutt's plans, like his flatboat enterprise, were a little uncertain in their beginnings. Meantime, however, a job turned up in the piloting of a flatboat down the Sangamon River in a flood. It was a task which called for nerve and skill as well as strength, for there were places where the swollen current carried the boat across prairie, two or three miles away from the regular channel, and all knowledge of the latter was of no account. There was a whole family on board with their household goods, bound for Texas, and their tall pilot steered them safely down the freshet, as far as his contract called for.

Then he left them in other hands and walked back to New Salem.

More loitering and waiting followed, with a process of getting acquainted with everybody, and at last Mr. Offutt's goods arrived. He added to them by purchasing the stock on hand of what would otherwise have been the rival establishment. He had kept his liking for his flatboat hero, and Abe was engaged as clerk and salesman of the new concern. It was a rise in life for him; one more round of the ladder he was climbing out of the miry bog in which he had been born.

Mr. Offutt was an enterprising man, and he now rented the mill itself from its owners, and put it under the especial charge of Abe, while a clerk named Green was assigned to duty at the store. Lincoln had tried his hand at many things, and now he was a miller, as if no point of life should be found at which he had not come into contact with the people he lived among. He mingled with them everywhere, being thoroughly one of them. He soon discovered that not even the woods of Indiana had developed a rougher, coarser, and in some respects a more vicious and degraded community. Fighting, drinking, gambling, riotous dissipation of all the ruder varieties, were the order of the day, and of almost every day. Abe's physical prowess once more stood him in good stead. It enabled him in time to set up as a sort of heavy-handed keeper of the peace: but this could not be, of course, until he had been tested against the local bully.

The boasts of his friends, headed by Mr. Offutt, shortly brought that matter about. The latter freely declared that Abe could outrun, throw, or whip any man in Sangamon County, and that he knew more than any other man alive, and would be President of the United States some day. He had reasons of his own for the faith that was in him; but over at Clary's Grove there was another man who imagined a large share at least of all that praise his own peculiar due. He too had enthusiastic admirers ready to do his boasting for him.

The "Clary's Grove Boys" were a set of unmitigated ruffians, and Jack Armstrong was their best man. From all accounts it is hard to guess who or what could have been their worst, and all peaceable people stood in dread of them.

There came one day a kind of boasting match between Offutt and Bill Clary, of Clary's Grove, and it could have but one result. Abe Lincoln and Jack Armstrong were pitted against each other for a wrestle, in spite of all the strong objections made by the former. That was not the sort of competition or success that Mr. Offutt's foreman was studying for, and he did his best to avoid it; but it was too late to escape, for the match had been definitely made.

The confidence of the Clary's Grove Boys in their champion was unbounded, and so was that of the public generally, so that the tide of betting and talk ran all in favor of Jack Armstrong, until the two antagonists were fairly clinched in the ring.

The struggle which followed was no common one, for the men were well matched, and, so long as the rules of fair wrestling were observed, neither succeeded in gaining any advantage. At last, both out of breath, they separated and stood looking at each other.

"Jack," said Lincoln, "let's quit. You can't throw me and I can't throw you."

The champion had been deeply stung by his unexpected failure, and now a chorus of biting remarks arose among his own friends and followers. He made no verbal reply, but rushed right in again in the hope of suddenly securing a "foul hold" and an unfair advantage. But he had already tried too far even the steady temper of his antagonist: in another instant, caught by the throat in a pair of iron hands, he was held out at arm's length, and shaken as if he had been a child.

Then the cry was, "A fight! A fight!" and the supporters of Mr. Offutt were by no means equal, in either numbers or bru-

tality, to those of Bill Clary. The latter claimed the stakes, and they would perhaps have been surrendered to him but for the aroused condition of Abe Lincoln's temper. He had an abundance of it if any one would take the trouble to stir it up, and it refused always to go down rapidly. He now declared himself ready and willing to fight Armstrong or any of his fellows. The consequences might have been serious but for the arrival of Mr. Rutledge, the owner of the mill and the great man of New Salem. The noisy mob had all a mob's respect for well-clad wealth. The mill-owner was able to restore the broken peace, and there was no fighting done.

The episode was full of important consequences to Abraham Lincoln. His courage and prowess had been thoroughly tested and had made a deep impression upon the minds of his rough neighbors. He was in no danger of further challenges from any of them, and Jack Armstrong avowed himself the fast friend of the man who had given him so good a shaking. The further results were only a question of time, for the wrestling match which was not won by either of the contestants gained for Abe Lincoln a strong and devoted, if somewhat turbulent, constituency. Every member of the Clary's Grove gang had a vote, and with it a strong admiration for a man who could not only read and write, but could hold a bully at arm's length. The story of the "match" went far and wide, and its hero was thenceforth a man of note and influence in that community.

Thenceforward, moreover, the immediate neighborhood had a recognized and respected peacemaker, and became a more pleasant place of residence for men of quiet tastes. Not to such a degree, however, that an utter stranger would be wise in loitering here and there too much unless he were prepared to look out for his personal safety somewhat as Lincoln had done.

The new foreman of Offutt's mill found that his duties left him with time on his hands, and he did not propose to waste it.

He could already read and write and "cipher." He could make speeches. He could even compose essays and get them printed. He knew that he had a fair capacity for the use of words. But he had latterly made an important discovery. It was that human language, his own in particular, had its laws, and these had been ferreted out and formulated by men of learning, and that no man could be called "educated" while ignorant of them. He went at once to Mr. Graham, the schoolmaster of New Salem, and asked him questions about grammar.

"I have a notion to study it."

"If you ever expect to go before the public in any capacity, I think it's the best thing you can do."

"If I had a grammar I'd begin on it right away."

The schoolmaster knew of one that could be had of a man named Vaner, only six miles away, and the rare book was purchased and brought back to town with all the speed in the long limbs of its new owner. Whether or not it would better fit him to come before such a public as that of Clary's Grove, or even New Salem, Abe gave all his spare time to the mastery of it.

There were other books now within reach, and these also were doggedly conquered, one by one. The daylight was burned over them, while the student lay at full length on his counter in the store, waiting for customers, or stretched upon the grass outside in dull seasons, or sitting on a sack of corn, "between grists," at the mill. When evening came, he would go over to the cooper-shop and read there, burning shaving after shaving, one kindled from another, in place of unattainable candles. These were not only scarce but costly, and Abe's wages permitted him no vain extravagances. He was fighting his upward way, inch by inch, with iron resolution. Even the New Salem community could plainly discern how fast his inner man was growing. They were all but proud of him, and the fame of his knowledge spread far and wide, keeping even pace with his reputation for story-telling and for shaking



Jack Armstrong. He could not fail to be popular among those who knew him well, and every fresh arrival from the outside world was sure to be seized upon and made a friend of. Yes, and then subjected to a pumping process, which drew from him, for Abe's benefit, whatever he might know. There is hardly a human being from whom such an inquirer could not learn something, and the power to so gather wisdom grows continually with its use.

Lincoln's first political speech in Illinois had dealt with the problem of the future navigation of the Sangamon River, and now, early in the spring of 1832, a company of gentlemen went so far, in attempting a practical solution, as to charter a small steamboat named the "Talisman," and decide to send her up the stream as high as she could go. Quite a number of questions could be answered by the results of such an experiment: but it was not tried in flood-time or they might have found and reported much more water in the channel. They were wise enough to secure Abe Lincoln's services as pilot, "from Beardstown, up and back." He steered the boat in safety around the many crooks and windings, avoiding all snags and bars and similar perils, until she found her further progress barred by the New Salem mill-dam. If she could not pass that barrier the Sangamon could not be truthfully set down on any map as a navigable stream.

There was but one way of overcoming the difficulty, and enough of the dam was promptly torn away to permit the steamboat to pass. On she went. But there were perils before her even then; for she reached the shallow water above, only to find that it was hourly getting shallower, and that the river was rapidly falling. The experiment had been faithfully tried. The inquirers knew just how far they could take just such a craft up the Sangamon at somewhat low water.

The problem now remaining was how to get her down the river again, and it seemed a serious one; but their pilot managed it for them. He is said to have been paid forty dollars



for that part of his achievement ; but he economically walked all the way home from Beardstown to New Salem.

Feat after feat of self-denial, skill, strength, ingenuity, and perseverance were telling fast upon the character and education of Mr. Offutt's brawny "clerk." It was especially well for him, indeed, that he should learn to be a good pilot in dangerous and "falling" waters.

## CHAPTER XII.

## THE BLACKHAWK WAR.

Lincoln a Volunteer—Army Discipline—Captain Lincoln under Punishment—Going to a New School—Regulars and Volunteers—1832, A.D.

ONE reason why Mr. Offutt could spare his foreman for a steamboat trip up and down the Sangamon was that his various mercantile and milling enterprises were coming to a disastrous end. One after another he was compelled to give them up. Hardly was the "Talisman" safe in the lower river, before her pilot found his occupation as a clerk gone from him; his employer had departed, no man knew whither, and the store was closed.

The mill returned to the management of its owners, and Abe Lincoln was once more utterly adrift.

Those, however, were stirring times in Illinois, for the great war-chief of the Sacs, the terrible Blackhawk, was over the northwestern border with the full strength of his tribe. He was said, also, to have formed a great confederacy, after the manner of King Philip, Pontiac, and Tecumseh, of the Winnebagoes, Foxes, Sioux, Kickapoos, and other tribes. This was true enough; but the whites did not as yet know how completely the savage league had fallen to pieces.

The Governor of Illinois was calling loudly for volunteers to act with the regular forces of the United States in checking the raid of the red men.

There had been a good deal of desultory border warfare during the previous year, and some Illinois troops had taken part in it. It had been of a somewhat bloody nature at several points, but the Indians had finally retreated, and had promised, at the

end of the campaign, to behave themselves more peaceably in future. Their promises were not made to be kept any longer than until presents could be received and spring should come again. They had broken them now, and it was necessary that they should have a sharp lesson administered to them.

The military experience of Abraham Lincoln had been begun for him in the fall of 1831, when, at a militia-muster at Clary's Grove, the "boys" had chosen him captain of the company. He was not present when elected, but accepted the honor thrust upon him, made a speech of thanks, and served during the muster. He afterwards said that if he had not been down the river in Offutt's flatboat in the spring of 1831, he should have surely then enlisted among the volunteers then called out, and gone to the frontier instead of into the store and mill.

Now there was something on hand more serious than a mere "muster," for nearly the same men were organizing a company for active service. The choice of a captain became a question of importance. There were but two candidates, Lincoln and a man named Kirkpatrick, owner of the sawmill at which the logs had been made into planks for Mr. Offutt's flatboat. There was an old grudge between them, beginning in that connection, and the rivalry ran high until the votes were counted, when it was found that Lincoln had beaten his competitor "out of sight." It was no wonder, for the men who had voted were mostly the same who had stood around the ring and seen him shake Jack Armstrong, and they had clear notions of the qualities required by a man whose duty it would be to keep order in their camp. He must have the necessary muscles and fighting pluck to whip any rough in his company, or he was no captain for them. No doubt it was a good escape for Mr. Kirkpatrick, the Clary's Grove boys themselves being judges.

Neither the young captain nor his mutinous, disorderly recruits had the slightest prophetic idea how needful it was that Abraham Lincoln should be taught by practical experience the

difficulties in the way of turning raw volunteers into soldiers. He had great lessons to learn in the few short weeks of the Blackhawk War.

The volunteers from that part of the State gathered at Beardstown and Rushville to be organized into regiments. Captain Lincoln's company was made part of a regiment commanded by Colonel Samuel Thompson. On the 27th of April the whole force marched for the Black River country, where Blackhawk and his warriors lay, going by way of Oquaka, on the Mississippi.

There had been no time for the drill or discipline of that array of free frontiersmen, and no company among them all stood in greater need of both than did the one which had mustered at Clary's Grove.

What could men know of the first duty of a soldier, when in all their lives they had never been taught to obey anything? Even their captain required immediate instruction. While encamped at Henderson River—over which the soldiers had built a bridge, so rude that many horses were lost in trying to get a foothold upon it, down the steep bank—an order was issued by Gen. Whiteside, in command of the forces, forbidding the discharge of firearms within fifty paces of the camp limits.

A military order was nothing but the word of one man, and the prohibition must mean "fifty paces, more or less," thought Captain Lincoln, and so he discharged his pistol recklessly, within a dozen steps of the given line. It was a bad mistake, since the forty paces he had failed to walk measured the entire question of army discipline and of military success or failure, and it was eminently needful that he, of all men, should be made to understand that vital matter.

His sword was taken from him, and he was put under arrest for an entire day; the very lightness of the punishment showing how much in need of further instruction were the officers and men of General Whiteside's volunteer army.

No more was said about the affair after that, and Captain Lincoln returned to duty. He had in this case suffered somewhat for a fault of his own; but he was shortly to incur a more severe disgrace for a sin of which he was innocent. So he was to learn how easily any commander may be ruined by unfaithful subordinates.

From Henderson River the army marched to Yellow Banks, on the Mississippi, where they were visited by a band of Cherokees from the Iowa shore, and were treated to a war-dance. Thence a sharp push forward for a few days brought them to the mouth of Rock River and near the field of their expected campaign. From that place they were to advance up the river about fifty miles to Prophetstown, and await the arrival of the United States regular troops who were to act with them. But when the order to "fall in" reached the company commanded by Captain Lincoln, it could not be complied with.

Aided by a scapegrace from another company, and without the knowledge of their strictly temperate commander, the men had supplied themselves with liquor stolen from the officers' quarters, and most of them were still under the effects of it. It was all in vain for Captain Lincoln and his orderly sergeant to urge the wretched drunkards to form company. Even if they consented to try, they could not keep their ranks, and too many of them only mocked at all the orders given them.

The army moved that day without the disgraced, besotted squad, and it was ten o'clock before Captain Lincoln could march at all. Even then he was compelled to halt by the way, that his mutinous ruffians might sleep off the vile stupor they had brought upon themselves. He pushed them onward after that, and rejoined the main body in the night, only to find himself once more put under arrest and compelled to wear a wooden sword for two whole days. These were not precisely the military honors he had thirsted for, but he was not likely to forget either their causes or any of the lessons which came with them.

Instead of waiting at Prophetstown for the regular troops to arrive, General Whiteside determined to push on towards Dixon, forty miles further. He left his baggage-train by the way, in his blind haste to meet an enemy. The men caught the infection of his inexperienced recklessness and threw away their rations, so that their forced march brought them to Dixon better prepared for a famine than a fight. They were joined there by two battalions of mounted men as rash as themselves, and General Whiteside yielded to the clamor of these unwise horsemen that they should at once be sent forward in search of Blackhawk and his warriors.

Alas for them! Their search was only too successful. They found an ambuscade of seven hundred chosen braves, commanded by the chief in person. In a few hours more all that were left of the two battalions came straggling back to Dixon with the bloody story of "Stillman's defeat." The next day the main body of the whites moved forward to the ghastly scene of the disaster; but they were destitute of provisions, the men were hungry and mutinous, and the only thing that army was fit to do was to march back and wait for supplies and for better leaders.

There was much fatigue and suffering in all this marching and counter-marching, and Captain Lincoln shared it all with his men. Their personal attachment to him had increased daily, for they had found but one man in the whole army who could match him as a wrestler. Even then there was a dispute as to whether Lincoln was fairly thrown. His men would not admit the fact, even after he himself frankly acknowledged it.

He had need of all his popularity one day. An old Indian came rashly into camp, trusting to the protection of a written passport signed by General Cass, and professing to be a friend of the white men. The soldiery was smarting under defeats and privations, and they refused to believe that a red man could be other than a sort of human wild beast, whose life was forfeit whenever and wherever he might be found.

The poor old savage had come in alone, hungry, helpless, in search of food, and now an angry mob was rushing upon him, seeking to murder him. His last moment seemed to have arrived, when a tall man in the uniform of a captain dashed through the crowd and stood erect in front of him.

"Men! this must not be done! He must not be shot and killed by us."

His very body seemed to be growing, as the righteous anger swelled hotly within him. But one of the armed mob, after a moment of amazed silence, found voice to whine,

"But, Captain, that there Indian is a damned spy."

There were swarms of brutal and thoughtless men around ready to catch the word, and for a few moments Lincoln's own life was worth but little more than that of the old red man who was cowering behind him. He spoke again, passionately, powerfully, waving them back with his long arms, and they were beginning to grow calmer and hear reason, when another whine arose:

"This is cowardly on your part, Lincoln."

The Captain's temper was already at white heat, but it blazed yet higher as he fiercely responded:

"If any man thinks I am a coward, let him test it."

There was still another despicable snarl:

"Well, Lincoln, you're a larger and heavier man than any of us."

"You can guard against that. Choose your own weapons."

Every line of his dark face told them he was ready, and not a coward of them all stepped out to apply the test. The life of the vagrant Indian was saved, and the young captain who protected him had won the brightest laurel gathered by any hero of the Blackhawk War, although he was never actually under fire in any of its recorded battles.

All this shows how miserable was the discipline and soldier-ship of the Illinois volunteers of all grades. But they were not without cause for their constant complaints and insubordination.



The regular-army officers despised the volunteers then, as they did for a while at a later day and on a larger scale ; and their prejudices led them to discriminate in the issue of rations and pay, and in assignments to duty, whenever possible, in favor of United States troops. An improper order came to Captain Lincoln and he obeyed it, but went immediately afterwards to protest in person against the injustice done his men and to their volunteer comrades. He said to the official concerned, in plain words :

“ Sir, you forget that we are not under the rules and regulations of the War Department at Washington ; are only volunteers under the orders and regulations of Illinois. Keep in your own sphere and there will be no difficulty ; but resistance will hereafter be made to your unjust orders. And further, my men must be equal in all particulars, in rations, arms, camps, etc., to the regular army.”

He carried his point, and there was an immediate improvement in the management of affairs. But he had done a very extraordinary thing. Long years afterwards it was to become a matter of national importance that he should thoroughly understand the nature and extent of the perpetual jealousy between the Regular Army and the Volunteers ; and now he had mastered the entire subject once for all, and had learned precisely how the resulting difficulties were to be overcome.

Here was a change indeed. The inner man of the bare-footed Indiana plowboy who had been snubbed by John Breckinridge for daring to speak to him had already grown amazingly. He had reached the mental and moral stature of a hero, who could control a mob of ruffians one day, and force justice from the astonished insolence of epanleted authority another.

Every man, moreover, who found himself better fed and cared for in consequence of that bold protest was likely to return to the banks of the Sangamon with a high opinion and a good report to make to his neighbors of Abraham Lincoln.

The discontent of the volunteers was just; but it rendered them of little further use as an army. At their own request, they were marched from Dixon to Ottawa, Illinois, by way of Pawpaw Grove, and there disbanded on the 28th of May. The best material for soldiers in the whole world had been rendered worthless in four weeks by incompetent commanders and an inefficient commissariat, at a heavy expense to the public; but a great deal had been accomplished, nevertheless, in the needful instruction given to one young captain.

The Governor of the State called for two thousand men to take the places of the disbanded regiments, and a large number of the discharged men re-enlisted at once. Officers became privates rather than go home in such an inglorious fashion. General Whiteside himself entered the ranks as a common soldier, and so, among the rest, did Captain Lincoln, as a member of the "Independent Spy Company."

By the middle of June the new forces were ready, and they again marched up the banks of Rock River. In the mean time Blackhawk and his warriors overran the country they had come to conquer and intended to keep.

The troops were fairly well-handled now, and the campaign which followed was a vigorous one, resulting in the utter defeat and almost the destruction of the savage invaders. But the work of the Independent Spy Company included little fighting. There was a great deal of hard work done by them indeed. There was much perilous scouting, with fast traveling as messengers, on horseback and on foot, and their exposure to danger was of a sort that they did not need to be ashamed of. The company was finally disbanded, and the men were discharged at White Water, Wisconsin, just as the war was drawing to a close. Lincoln prepared to set out for home, in company with a friend and comrade named George W. Harrison. Their horses were stolen from them the night before their intended start, and they were compelled to reach Peoria, Illinois, on foot, with some help of borrowed rides

on the horses of other soldiers who were going in the same direction.

Here they bought a canoe and paddled down the Illinois River until, just below Pekin, they overtook a timber-raft. It was easy to make friends with the raftsmen, in whose company they floated lazily down stream as far as the town of Havana.

The rest of the homeward way was a hot and tedious tramp across country. It was ended in due time, and the man who went out as a captain and came home as a private had returned to discover, through a slow and painful progress, what and how much his army career had done for him.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## POLITICS.

Lincoln a Candidate—Stumping the District—Defeat—The Credit System  
—Lincoln a Merchant.'

THE politics of the United States were in a noteworthy condition in the year 1832. There were parties, and party-spirit ran high; but party organization, such as now controls the country, did not then exist. In the West generally, and in Illinois in particular, the complicated machinery which was already in process of formation among the older States was wholly unknown. Instead of it there was a species of political chaos, although the State was nominally Democratic in its majorities, and for many years continued to be so. The old Federal party was dead and buried, the Whig party was yet unformed, and men wandered hither and thither among the great questions of the day, vainly striving to discover what these were and whither the country was drifting.

In the absence of nominating conventions large or small, it was the custom for candidates for office to nominate themselves, if they could persuade a few friends to urge them to do so. One consequence of this was that, for almost any elective honor, high or low, there were frequently as many men in the field as candidates as could combine their ambition with the energy and means to make the required canvass. For the latter some kind of personal popularity was of much more importance than any other qualification.

The volunteers who went from Sangamon County to the Blackhawk War returned to their homes in squads or singly, the greater number bringing little with them besides their very

moderate allowances of military glory. Abe Lincoln succeeded in adding to his own share of this, and it was as large as anybody's, an intense but somewhat local popularity. He greatly increased his fame as an orator, also, by a speech he made in the New Salem debating club shortly after his return. It was the first regular "speech" he had delivered in that community, and his neighbors were ignorant of his powers until that hour. When he arose to begin, the audience expected no more than a well-told story and a good joke or so, and prepared itself accordingly for an appreciative laugh.

Abe's hands were in his pockets at the first, and his words came to him slowly; but he was not there for the purpose of making fun. To the astonishment of his hearers, he seriously took hold of the subject before them, warmed with it as he went on, argued, reasoned, declaimed, with a force and an awkward eloquence which took them all by storm.

Mr. James Rutledge, the owner of the mill, was president of the club, and he for some reason felt a deep interest in the coming election for members of the State Legislature. He was very strongly impressed by that speech, and a few days afterwards he urged the young orator to offer himself as a candidate.

Lincoln at first refused, on the ground that he was little known in the greater part of the county, which was a large one, and that he should surely be defeated.

"Perhaps not," said Mr. Rutledge. "They'll know you better after you've stumped the county. Anyhow, it'll do you good to try."

Other friends added their solicitations, and Lincoln's modesty gave way under the pressure.

It seemed a tremendous undertaking for a mere boy who the year before had drifted into New Salem as a farm-hand and flat-boatman. That it was not altogether absurd offers a window through which a remarkably good view can be obtained of the then social and political condition of things in Illinois.

The general canvass that fall was hot and spirited, for it was the year of General Jackson's election to the Presidency. Lincoln had from boyhood admired "Old Hickory." He was still nominally a "Jackson man," although the principles he advocated in his speeches were almost identical with those upon which the Whig party was afterwards built up.

The politics of the State of Illinois, however, were agitated by other questions besides those upon which the nation as a whole was divided. Candidates for the Legislature, even more than for other public positions, were required to meet their constituents upon numerous topics of strictly local importance. The State was fast going crazy upon the subject of "internal improvement." Roads of all kinds, and navigable rivers of designated sizes and patterns, were wanted in all directions. There was a vague idea abroad, daily obtaining a strong hold upon the minds of men, that all these could be provided by a majority vote of the State Legislature in the enacting of a "law."

Lincoln believed that a great deal could be done for the Sangamon River, and he was ready to prove it upon stump after stump. He was also earnestly in favor of laws providing for popular education. An address which he issued to his constituents two years later dealt freely with this and other topics, and was a very creditable document for a youth of twenty-five with barely a year of aggregated schooling to look back upon. He now issued no address, but he had had some training for the task set before him, and he took hold of it vigorously.

A canvass of Sangamon County was not in those days a matter for a man of weak body or sensitive nerves to think of lightly. It meant a going from place to place wherever a crowd could be gathered, and a readiness to face boldly not only any assembly of proposed hearers, but also such other assemblages as might propose to interfere with both speaking and hearing. There were fair copies of Clary's Grove and its gang of roughs in almost every precinct, and all this element



was sure to make itself heard and felt in election-time. At one place, while Lincoln was speaking, a friend of his became engaged in a fight and was getting the worst of it. So was the speech, by reason of the divided interest and attention of the crowd. The orator left the "stump" to interfere, but one of the men in his way refused to let him pass. There could be no hesitation on the part of the "candidate." The impeding person was promptly seized by the nape of the neck and the seat of his trowsers, was pitched away many feet into the grass, the friend in trouble was rescued, and then the interrupted speech was resumed under better auspices.

There were other candidates traversing Sangamon County upon the selfsame errand; men who were better known and whose political strength had been previously developed. It was no disgrace to Lincoln that he failed of an election by four hundred and seventy votes. New Salem precinct stood by him manfully. There were two hundred and eighty votes cast there, and he got all but three of them. The shaking of Jack Armstrong, the Blackhawk War, with all the other brilliant exploits of Mr. Offutt's clerk, had bound his neighbors to him for life and death. If there had been voters enough in New Salem, he could have been elected to anything.

Now that he was beaten at the polls—for his good—it became necessary for Lincoln to look around him for some other occupation than that of making laws for the State.

He was fond of playing with the children of his friends, and he was always ready to chop wood or do any other kindly act for the utterly poor around New Salem. His hand was out to every man. But all this would not buy clothes or law-books, or pay for board.

He was living at the time with an intimate friend named Herndon, one of two brothers who kept a store in the village. Besides theirs, another was carried on by a man named Radford, and still another, a smaller one, by Mr. Rutledge, the owner of the mill.



The course of these three establishments at this time was somewhat remarkable.

"Jim" Herndon became dissatisfied and sold his interest to a loose character named Berry. "Row" Herndon quarreled with his new partner in six weeks, and sold his share to Abe Lincoln. The Clary's Grove roughs had a grudge against Radford, and one night they came to town and took it out by smashing his windows. They scared him so badly that he sold the wreck of his establishment at once to Bill Green on credit for four hundred dollars. The firm of Lincoln & Berry the next day bought out Bill Green, also "on time," giving him their note of hand for two hundred and fifty dollars profit on his sudden bargain. Then Mr. Rutledge sold Lincoln & Berry his own little grocery, and the new concern united the three "stores" in one, having given little for them all besides their own "notes of hand." Their rivals in business, destined to survive them, were the firm of Hill & McNeil.

Almost all business was done upon the credit system in those days. It continued so to be until a long succession of financial disasters had taught men the value of hard cash and short settlements.

Lincoln was now a merchant; beginning his career under a load of debt, and with the yet heavier burden of an idle, dissolute, extravagant, utterly worthless partner.

It required no longer time than the winter months of 1832-1833 to determine the fate of such an undertaking, and the firm of Lincoln & Berry sold out in their turn, and "on time," to a couple of brothers named Trent.

The store was lifted from Lincoln's shoulders, if the debts were not. These could not begin to press him for some months to come, and he could turn his attention, meantime, to some other means of earning a livelihood. He was still boarding with "Row" Herndon, and he was working hard at all the law-books he could lay his hands on. He gave to these every hour he could spare for them. But something else had now to be done if he would live to study.

Once more the pathway to success seemed for a moment to be barred before him, and once more an altogether unlooked-for opening appeared.

Mr. Calhoun, surveyor of Sangamon County, was overrun with business, and needed an assistant. Immigrants and land-buyers were pouring into the prairie country in a constantly increasing stream. It was necessary that their demands should be met, and that the surveying called for should be honestly and faithfully done. The temptations to carelessness and corruption were many. Mr. Calhoun knew Abe Lincoln and trusted him thoroughly. He also knew him to be ignorant of surveying, but he went to see him about it. He took with him a book of instruction in the art, and told Abe that as soon as he should be ready to go to work he should have as much as he could do.

That was enough for the man of iron perseverance. He took the book on surveying and went out into the country to board with Minter Graham, the same schoolmaster with whom he had consulted about English grammar. In six weeks he was ready to report to Mr. Calhoun for service. They had been weeks of precisely such unflinching mental toil as he had for so long a time trained himself to endure.

Thenceforward there was no danger but what he could pay his board-bills. His work was found to stand all tests of accuracy, and Mr. Calhoun kept his word about giving him enough of it. In all the intervals of that employment he struggled on with his law-books. He even walked all the way to Springfield and back to borrow of a friend there a volume he could not afford to buy.

Once more a public employment came to him, though a marvelously small one, for on the 7th of May, 1833, he was appointed postmaster of New Salem. There is no record of where he kept that "post-office," but there is a legend that he kept it in his hat. The people of New Salem had few correspondents, and the mail did not arrive every day. Indeed, one

of the special and important duties of the postmaster was to read and even to write letters for those whose lack of education forbade their doing either for themselves. Here was a curious mixture of occupations, truly; but there was life for the present and hope for the future. The prospect would not have been at all gloomy if it had not been for the store and the cloud of debts which hung over it.

The Trent brothers kept the business going for a few months, and then they gave it up and ran away, never again to be heard of in New Salem. Berry also departed from the scene of his misbehavior. He did not live long afterwards. Even before he went away, the accumulated load of debt for all those rash purchases "on time" came drifting back upon the shoulders of the one honest and hard-working man whose name was signed to the notes of hand.

Abraham Lincoln could not run away. Still less could he pay the notes. He was able to make arrangement for the future payment of such of them as were held by his friends, for every man of them trusted his honesty entirely and never dreamed of pressing him. In their eyes he was an ill-used man, and his misfortunes in business made them more his friends than ever. One only of the notes had drifted away through the hands of successive holders beyond all friendly control. It was the one for four hundred dollars given to Mr. Radford for the wreck of his store and stock the night before the day on which Bill Green's good bargain had been taken off his hands. This piece of paper was now held by a Mr. Van Bergen, and he sued upon it, and of course obtained an immediate judgment against Lincoln. An execution was issued, and the iron hand of the sheriff was held out for all the debtor's personal property. His few books could not be touched, under the exemption law, but his horse, saddle, bridle, surveyor's instruments of all kinds, the tools of his new trade, were seized upon without pity. Their loss might take away his means of livelihood and break up his growing business, but it could not

really set him back one step behind the point to which he had so steadily worked his way. Among the many friends he had made was a well-to-do farmer named Short, and this man, unsolicited, joined Lincoln in giving to the sheriff the needful bond that the goods should be delivered on the day of sale, so that their owner could use them meantime.

Lincoln did not attend the sale of his property, but Mr. Short was there with another of his friends named Greene. Between them they bought back all that the sheriff had seized, at the sum of two hundred and forty-five dollars. They divided their outlay nearly equally between them, and at once turned over their purchases to the man they had come to help, waiting for repayment until he should be able to earn the money.

The remainder of that summer was a busy time for the postmaster, the deputy county surveyor, and the one law-student of New Salem. To all his other work was now added the continual reference to him of small legal matters, such as the drawing up of deeds and other papers. He even "pettifogged" small cases before justices of the peace, but for all these acts of neighborly kindness he never thought of charging a fee. Nor was this all the duty forced upon him by the unbounded confidence men had acquired in his fairness and integrity.

The one great sport of that region was horse-racing. There were many horses of many kinds, and there was a continual succession of "matches" between them, but the human beings were few indeed by whose decisions, as judges of the result, all contestants were willing to abide. Much against his will, therefore, Abe was frequently compelled to yield to the unanimous popular demand, and sit in "the judges' stand" while the horses were running. He had plenty of disputes to settle, but it was of no use for any disappointed or quarrelsome jockey to appeal from or severely criticise a decision made by Abe Lincoln. Once uttered, it had all the force of law.

In spite of his hard study and his lack of any bodily toil to maintain the hardness of his muscles, his strength seemed to increase rather than diminish. Harnessed by shoulder-straps to a box of stones weighing half a ton, he lifted it repeatedly and with ease. This and other feats of a similar nature enabled him to maintain his place as a keeper of the peace and a recognized disturber of all ruffianism. No fight could be fought out in the old-time way if Lincoln were at hand to interfere with it. It was so easy for him to take an angry man in each hand and hold two foolish fellows wide apart, until they should agree with him to let the matter drop and make the quarrel up. As a rule, moreover, at least one of the two men was likely to think more highly than ever of the rough peacemaker.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## FIRST LOVE.

A true Romance—Elected to the State Legislature—A new Suit—Free thinking.

THE honest and upright ambition of Abraham Lincoln to make a man of himself had needed no spurring. There were within him springs of life and thought as yet unopened and of whose existence he was hitherto ignorant. These were now to be discovered to him, and a new and strong incentive to exertion was to add its power to the other forces which were urging him upward.

The third child of Mr. James Rutledge, Lincoln's devoted friend and admirer, was a girl of high principle and uncommon beauty. In all the country around there was no maiden to be compared with fair Ann Rutledge. Her mental accomplishments were only such as could then be obtained in Illinois by the daughter of a country merchant of intelligence and property, but they were sufficient. She could not fail to have admirers; and when, in the second year of Lincoln's New Salem life, he came to board for a while with her father, she was already promised in marriage to his friend McNeil, a young and thriving trader and farmer of New Salem. There came to her soon afterwards a strange, romantic history. Her betrothed revealed to her the fact that his name was not McNeil but McNamar, and that he had so concealed his identity in coming West that he might build a fortune unknown to his family and then return to care for his father in his old age. He was now closing up his business, turning his property into money,



and would go to New York, perform his purpose there, and come back to wed the girl who had given him her heart.

She heard and she believed him, and he went but he did not come again. He wrote to her of his father's sickness and death. Then other letters came, at longer and longer intervals, always promising to return and holding her to her engagement, until at last their coming ceased entirely.

It was a cruel, a terrible thing to fall upon a girl of nineteen, for she had loved him well until she had found him false. The one bitterer drop was added to her cup of trouble when she found that, during all that time, she had been winning the heart of a man whose faith could not be broken and whose integrity and manly worth all other men acknowledged.

More and more frequent grew the visits of the young law-student as the prospect of McNamar's return diminished, but with little encouragement from Ann until the summer of 1834. Her father's farm was but a small distance from that of Lincoln's friend Short, and Abe found many occasions for spending whole days together at the house of the man who so timely aided him.

Ann was as true as she was beautiful, and she at last was compelled to tell her urgent suitor frankly what bond it was that bade her not to love him. She refused, in her sensitive good faith, to see that she could be set free from her promise to McNamar without a formal spoken or written release. She could no longer love a man who had broken his word, had slighted her, had treated her with a neglect so heartless, but she was slow to admit her right to take another in his place. And yet she had already taken him, and Lincoln knew it, and he gave to her all the unmeasured strength of his first, whole-hearted love.

It was a loyal and manly thing to do. No other thing of which he had yet shown himself capable told half so much for the growth of his inner life or promised half so well.

He had something to live for now. He had a hope more



bright and beautiful than any dream he had dreamed, whether among the forests of Indiana, the rivers and bayous of the South, or the wealth-promising prairies where he had chosen his home. He worked as he had never worked before, toiling at his law-books as he rode or walked about the country. On one hot march, from Springfield home, with a volume of Blackstone's Commentaries he had borrowed, he mastered forty pages of it before he reached New Salem. With him to "master" a book was to seal its contents, as to their spirit and meaning, and largely as to their letter, in his memory forever, ready for all subsequent uses.

There was no need for any urgent friend to prompt his political ambition now. He was thirsting for such honors as would mark him as a man fitted to court and win Ann Rutledge. He well knew she would be pleased to see him win them for her, even while she reluctantly adhered to her romantic scruple concerning her broken bond.

Since the previous campaign the political world had undergone apparent changes, and the Whig party was taking form. Its principles were nearly those which Lincoln had already avowed, and he readily floated into it. Still, all party lines were as yet so loosely drawn that his Democratic personal friends were under no necessity of refusing him their votes, whatever they might do with other names upon their tickets. He announced himself as a candidate for election to the State Legislature, issued a printed address to the people of the county, and made a thorough stumping tour from neighborhood to neighborhood. He spoke as he had never before spoken, and was triumphantly elected although there were other strong candidates in the field.

In the summer of the year 1831 he had landed in Sangamon County, a penniless, friendless boy of twenty-two. Only three years later there were 1376 men in the same county ready to say by their votes that he was a suitable person to represent them at the State capital.

He had been growing fast in other ways than in the goodwill of his fellow-citizens; but he had not outgrown his honesty nor his debts. These had joined hands to keep him poor in purse, and a proper sense of personal dignity forbade him to go to the Capitol at Vandalia in the shabby clothing which was good enough for his daily round of life and work in New Salem. Money would also be required for other immediate expenses, and there was nothing in his hands that he could honestly sell to obtain it. He was already deeply in debt to his best friends, and his salary as a legislator could not be collected in advance. He had resources, however, and they did not fail him.

Among his older acquaintances was a man named Smoot, as dry a joker as himself, but better supplied with ready money. To him Lincoln went one day, in company with another friend, Hugh Armstrong.

"Smoot, did you vote for me?"

"I did that very thing."

"Well, that makes you responsible. You must lend me the money to buy suitable clothing, for I want to make a decent appearance in the Legislature."

"How much do you want?"

"About two hundred dollars, I reckon."

The honor of Sangamon County, and of New Salem in particular, was at stake, and the new representative received his two hundred dollars on the spot.

It is not difficult to guess whose eyes were among the first to discover how great a difference good clothing could make in the outer man of Ann Rutledge's tall lover. The new garments and the body under them were but a shell, however, inclosing the man to whom she was really surrendering her heart.

There were long weeks yet before Lincoln's new public duties were to begin, and not an hour of one of them could he afford to waste. He read as desperately as ever, and he was

also thinking deeply upon other subjects besides law. There was but little religion of any kind in and about New Salem, or through all the prairie country, in those rude days. Such as there was would hardly stand any exhaustive analysis. Few men gave any especial care to matters of faith or doctrine. There were many more horse-races and wrestling-matches than Gospel gatherings. The exceptional preaching was of a nature little calculated to impress a mind like that of Abraham Lincoln. Moreover, there was a jarring of sects and creeds, here and there, as in other communities always, and out of this came vastly more of contention than Christianity. If what he saw around him were all there was of religion, it required less effort to reject than to accept it; but the searching mind of the young thinker compelled him to make some sort of personal inquiry. His first teachers were about as bad as could have been given him, and he was not yet prepared to penetrate the shallow reasoning of Volney and Tom Paine. He even tried to follow out their lines of thought in an elaborate manuscript, and when this was finished he read it to a little circle in the store of Mr. Samuel Hill. There were those present who thought well of it, but a son of Mr. Hill expressed his own opinion in the plain word "infamous," took the paper in his hand and thrust it into the fire. There was nearly enough of it for a small book, but it burned well and Lincoln very sensibly let it burn.

He did not know how closely he was following in the footsteps of the great majority of those who honestly seek for the Truth. Still less could he then foresee the day when he should himself kneel down and lead a whole nation in prayer and fasting and thanksgiving and confession of sin, and that in their darkest hour of trial he should rise before them to encourage them to trust in the very God whose existence he was now in callow fashion persuading himself to deny.

All true thinkers are necessarily "free thinkers" until they enter into some description of bonds to their own self-conceit

and surrender their freedom to that miserable taskmaster. Lincoln began as a free inquirer, and never fell in with the mob of bondmen, but went on learning more and more until the very end. That at such a time he exercised himself so deeply on such a subject is an invaluable index to the formative processes of his inner life.

The time at last arrived for his journey to the Capitol of the State, then at Vandalia, in the southern part of the long, huge area of Illinois. Thanks to Mr. Smoot's friendly loan, he was well prepared to go with proper dignity, and to make a presentable appearance among his fellow-legislators. He had but a hundred miles or so to travel, but that short journey carried him on into a new sphere of life and action.

## CHAPTER XV.

## IN THE LEGISLATURE.

Practical Politics—Lessons in Public Finance—Blowing Bubbles—A great Darkness—1834-36.

MR. LINCOLN had now attained a position which was full of promise. The power of binding men to him by ties of strong personal attachment had been born with him. The capacity for influencing and controlling them when assembled as citizens for the discussion of political questions had been developed in him remarkably and almost without his knowledge. He was now to study and acquire the art or trade of managing a drove of selfish politicians. The material for such a training was gathered for him in perfection at Vandalia. He found himself surrounded by narrow-minded, ignorant embodiments of party prejudice, local jealousy, self-seeking, and self-conceit. In such a mob he could not help becoming a man of some mark, but during the greater part of that first "session" of 1834-1835 he neither sought nor attained especial prominence. He was as yet a student of politics, not ready to be an active worker and still less a leader. Of many things he knew as much as did the majority of his fellow-legislators, and of some things he knew a great deal more, but he was slow to tell them so. Few of them, at all events, could equal him in telling a story with a keen point to it, and none surpassed him in personal height or in the peculiar heartiness of manner which made him so speedily at home amid his new surroundings.

At the beginning of his education as a political manager, he was also at the beginning of a long course of experimental instruction as to what could and what could not safely be done

with public credit. He was to be taught fundamental truths of finance concerning a State or a nation, that he might not, in after-days, come ignorantly and without experience to the discussion and arbitrary decision of precisely such questions, relating to a wider field than that of the very young and now half-crazy State of Illinois.

Lincoln believed in a general system of public improvements, and so did almost everybody else; but the common accord ceased at that point. Beyond it lay a tangled mass of problems as to methods of procuring money wherewith to improve, and right along with these came a chaos of discord and contention as to how and where it should be spent, and which of the out-reaching, grasping local interests should first be served. The State was out of debt and its credit stood well in the money markets. It could readily borrow whatever it might need. It had sovereign power to create banks, and, through these, an unlimited capacity for the issue of paper money. The whole population was gambling in town-lots, lands, and almost every other kind of property.

Illinois was by no means alone in her gambling fever. A somewhat similar condition of affairs existed elsewhere, North, South, East, and West.

As for the Legislature, not a soul in Vandalia knew the first principles of finance or political economy. There had been as yet no teaching given to the New Salem member of a sort to open his eyes to the fragility of the bubbles he and his associates were about to inflate. All looked well, and nothing seemed requisite except the soapsuds of the State credit and the creative breath of the Legislature.

The speculative mania did not rise to fever-heat during that first winter, but some very fine bubbles were blown. A State bank was chartered, with a "capital" of a million and a half. A broken-down money-mill of a bank in the wretched village of Shawneetown, in the southern part of the State, was set running again by a law which declared that it had three hun-



dred thousand dollars to run with. The State borrowed half a million of actual dollars, and began to spend them on the western end of the Illinois and Michigan Canal. Nothing was done for the Sangamon River, and that and other incomplete streams were compelled to postpone for a while, at least, their ambition of becoming "navigable." Their friends, however, were firmly determined that the State credit and statute law should yet supply them with deep, well-made channels and an abundance of river-water, and thus everybody living along the banks of them would be rich at once. Mr. Lincoln was assigned a place upon the Committee on Public Accounts and Expenditures. It was a good enough corner in which to study and acquire the information he stood most in need of, but he did not bring an ounce of practical preparation to the legislative work set before him. He toiled away at his task, nevertheless, and at the end of the session he returned to his New Salem home and his law-books.

The year 1835 seemed to open brightly enough, but its coming weeks and months were bringing Lincoln deeper and sadder lessons than any which had yet been given him. He had already discovered in himself the germs of remarkable faculties. He had cultivated all industriously and with success, under the most adverse circumstances. There was in his growing soul yet one more power of whose very existence he was but dimly conscious. It was the power of suffering; the faculty of feeling inward pain more deeply, more keenly, than other men, and of keeping and carrying it longer. The related capacity for concealment did not come at the same time, but was to be developed later, when there should be greater need of it, that he might not fail in doing the duties whose needful performance should entail the suffering.

It is not known precisely when Ann Rutledge told her suitor that her heart was his, but early in 1835 it was publicly known that they were solemnly betrothed. Even then the scrupulous maiden waited for the return of the absent McNa-



mar, that she might be formally released from the obligation to him which he had so recklessly forfeited. Her friends argued with her that she was carrying her scruples too far, and at last, as neither man nor letter came, she permitted it to be understood that she would marry Abraham Lincoln as soon as his legal studies should be completed.

That was a glorious summer for him; the brightest, sweetest, hopefullest he yet had known. It was also the fairest time he was ever to see; for even now, as the golden days came and went, they brought an increasing shadow on their wings. It was a shadow that was not to pass away. Little by little came indications that the health of Ann Rutledge had suffered under the prolonged strain to which she had been subjected. Her sensitive nature had been strung to too high a tension, and the chords of her life were beginning to give way.

There were those of her friends who said that she died of a broken heart, but the doctors called it "brain-fever."

On the 25th of August, just before the summer died, she passed away from earth. But she never faded from the heart of Abraham Lincoln. She lived there in love and memory to the very last. In her early grave was buried the best hope he ever knew, and the shadow of that great darkness was never entirely lifted from him.

A few days before Ann's death, a message from her brought her betrothed to her bedside, and they were left alone. No one ever knew what passed between them in the endless moments of that last sad farewell; but Lincoln left the house with inexpressible agony written upon his face. He had been to that hour a man of marvelous poise and self-control, but the pain he now struggled with grew deeper and more deep, until, when they came and told him she was dead, his heart and will, and even his brain itself, gave way. He was utterly without help or the knowledge of possible help in this world or beyond it. He was frantic for the time, seeming even to lose the sense of his own identity, and all New Salem said that he was insane.

He piteously moaned and raved, "I can never be reconciled to have the snow, ruins, and storms beat upon her grave!"

The very earth her body slept in gathered to its grassy covering somewhat of the unutterable tenderness the strong man felt for his first love. His best friends seemed to have lost their influence over him, and he resisted their kindly efforts at comfort or control with all the gloomy peevishness and even the cunning of a madman.

All but one; for the same Bowlin Greene who had helped Short save his property for him at the sheriff's sale came now again to the rescue. He managed to entice the poor fellow to his own home a short distance from the village, there to keep watch and ward over him until the fury of his sorrow should wear away. There were well-grounded fears lest he might do himself some injury, and the watch was vigilantly kept. In a few weeks reason again obtained the mastery, and it was safe to let him return to his studies and his work. He could indeed work again, and he could once more study law, for there was a kind of relief in steady occupation and absorbing toil; but he was not, could not ever be, the same man. In time even the joke and the laugh would come to his lips, but they would never cease to have the appearance and character of brief sunshine breaking through a cloud, and there was always a great storm of rain resolutely held back in the inner darkness of that cloud.

Lincoln had been fond of poetry from boyhood, and had gradually made himself familiar with large parts of Shakespeare's plays and the works of other great writers. He now discovered in a strange collection of crude verses, by an unknown hand, the one poem which seemed best to express the morbid, troubled, sore condition of his mind. Those who then or afterwards heard him repeat the lines by William Knox, beginning—

"Oh, why should the spirit of mortal be proud?"

discovered what a wealth of pathetic expression could be poured forth through them. Uttered by him as the voice of his suffering, they took into their mournful cadences a power and a majesty borrowed from the grief which drove Abraham Lincoln from the grave of Ann Rutledge broken-hearted and all but insane.

All men in that vicinity well knew the sad, romantic story, and there were no hearts on the Sangamon prairies so hard that they were not touched by the sorrow of their friend and neighbor. His popularity increased daily as he went about among them, thin, haggard, gloomy, and he was more than ever the idol of New Salem. The winter passed away, and then the spring, and another summer brought with it a renewal of political excitement. There was no longer any question as to whether Mr. Lincoln should be elected to the Legislature. Thenceforward his place upon the Whig ticket was a matter of course so long as he should consent to such a use of his name. There was nothing, therefore, to mark for him especially the campaign of 1836, except the fact that he stumped the county and received a greater number of votes than was given to any other candidate who ran for the Legislature that year. In fact, among a population so shifting, changing, growing, he was already becoming one of the older and earlier settlers, and the majority of his fellow-citizens were new men compared to him.

## CHAPTER XVI.

## BUBBLE LEGISLATION.

An Episode—The Lightning-rod—The Long Nine—State Improvements—  
Anti-slavery Declarations—1836.

THERE is nothing else on earth so easily to be taken possession of as an empty house, whether or not the new occupant may be or become the owner.

When Lincoln returned to work and to political excitement he also necessarily returned to the society of women. He sorely needed all three, and every other attainable help, to keep his mind in order. It could hardly be called well regulated as yet, and his emotional nature was entirely out of gear. Kind and busy friends, moreover, came to the rescue, and, by their management, in the autumn of 1836 he found himself corresponding with an attractive young lady named Mary Owens. He had not at all forgotten Ann Rutledge, and the matter would be hard to understand if so many of the letters which passed between the two had not been preserved and actually printed. They offer a sufficient explanation, for they make very plain the fact that there was no feeling aroused on either side at all worthy to be spoken of as "love." She was handsome, well educated, intelligent, with enough of good sense to admire a strong and rising man. He was restless, feverish, unsettled, hungry at heart—he did not know for what; and so there grew up an intimacy, a friendship, a protracted, struggling imitation of a courtship and engagement. From the latter they were both finally glad to release each other.

It is entirely just to say of Mr. Lincoln that during that brief period of his life he knew very little of himself. The

continual developments of his nature and its powers must now and then have brought surprises to him, but it is a curious fact that nobody else seems ever to have been greatly surprised. He was a man from whom uncommon performances were expected.

In joke or in earnest, or in somewhat of both, one of the first public utterances in behalf of female suffrage came from his pen. In a printed declaration of his principles, issued during the canvass for that year's election, he said among other things:

"I go for all sharing the privileges of the government who assist in bearing its burdens. Consequently I go for admitting all whites to the right of suffrage who pay taxes or bear arms—by no means excluding females."

The subject was not then under discussion in Illinois, but Mr. Lincoln's after-course proved how prompt and decided was sure to be his response to any appeal to his sense of justice.

The style of his oratory was now rapidly improving, and his speeches became occasional surprises even to those who knew him best and expected most of him. He wasted nothing upon mere display, but then, as afterwards, he exhibited a marvelous capacity for using to advantage the smallest available fact or circumstance within his reach at the moment. The smaller and sharper might be the point of any thrust, the deeper he was apt to drive it home.

A good illustration of this faculty is found in a speech of his, in the campaign of 1836, in reply to a Mr. Forquer. This gentleman had deeply offended all notions of political morality by a recent desertion of the Whigs, and the feeling against him was very bitter. He was a man of wealth and standing, Register of the United States Land Office at Springfield, owning the best "frame house" in that town. From the roof of this residence arose the one solitary lightning-rod in all that part of the State, and it had attracted more than a little popular attention.

At a political meeting Mr. Lincoln made a speech of more

than common power, to Mr. Forquer's especial disgust and astonishment. He replied ably but superciliously, beginning with the rash assertion that "the young man would have to be taken down." Throughout his remarks he asserted and claimed his personal superiority. Lincoln listened attentively, and at the end of Mr. Forquer's speech he took the stand again. He replied with force and dignity to whatever of argument he had to deal with, but at the conclusion of his remarks he turned upon his lofty opponent with,

"You began your speech by announcing that 'this young man would have to be taken down.'"

Turning again to the crowd, he added :

"It is for you, not for me, to say whether I am up or down. The gentleman has alluded to my being a young man. I am older in years than I am in the tricks and trades of politicians. I desire to live, and I desire place and distinction as a politician; but I would rather die now than, like the gentleman, live to see the day when I would have to erect a lightning-rod to protect a guilty conscience from an offended God."

Nevertheless that solitary lightning-rod led Mr. Lincoln to a study and knowledge of the laws of electricity. Right there was a difference between him and the other men who stared at the novel iron ornament upon Mr. Forquer's roof. He alone could make a spear of it, in a speech, wherewith to transfix its owner, and then accept it as a directing finger pointing him the way to a new field of scientific inquiry.

He had made such good use of his first term in the Legislature that on his return he at once took rank as an able debater and parliamentarian. He was also skilled in the tactics required in securing majorities for his favorite schemes.

The politics of the State had now become more closely connected with those of the country at large.

The subject of State banks, carrying with it all questions of local finance, was interwoven with the management of the United States Treasury and the fate of the United States



Bank. At the same time, the policy of the general government with reference to its sales of public lands was nowhere of more importance than in Illinois.

Mr. Lincoln's brain was teeming more fruitfully than ever with projects for public improvements. The example of New York was continually before him, and he had formed, with reference to the canals of his own State, the high ambition of becoming "the De Witt Clinton of Illinois." There was nothing mean or low in such an aspiration in the mind of a young man who was only separated by five short years from the deck of a flatboat and by less than three from bankruptcy, poverty, and the sheriff's hammer.

He served upon the Committee on Finance. The ideas of State credit entertained by that committee may be gathered from the facts, among many, that for the furtherance of canal and other enterprises laws were passed authorizing loans to the amount of twelve millions of dollars. The money was to be obtained by the sale of State bonds, and was then to be employed in quite a variety of ways. It was fully believed that into the State, improved by that expenditure, a flood of immigration would surely and swiftly roll, to open farms, pay taxes, and so to make the bonds good property in the hands of the imaginary capitalists who were now to buy them.

The passage of a "law" creating capitalists for the occasion does not seem to have been thought of, but the nominal capital of the State Bank and of other banks was largely increased, that they might issue abundant notes, and so that "money" might be plentiful.

Small blame rightly attaches to any of the untutored legislators who proposed or voted for all these wonderful schemes for making all men rich at railway speed. They knew no better until, at last, the bursting of their own pretty bubbles, with all the other bubbles the whole nation had been blowing, sent them back to their constituencies sadder and wiser men.

One other project was kept continually in the foreground



by that Legislature. The seat of the State government, at Vandalia, was too far from the geographical center. It was inconvenient, unpopular, and there were several other towns, some of them even more badly situated, whose citizens were eager to have the advantages of a "capital" within their corporate limits.

For many reasons the young city of Springfield, in Lincoln's own county of Sangamon, seemed entitled to the preference. Every man of the county representatives could discern those reasons clearly and argue them convincingly. There were nine of these gentlemen, two in the Senate and seven in the lower house, and their bodily size had acquired for them the title of "the Long Nine." Taken together, they were fifty-four feet long; Mr. Lincoln himself having a surplus of four inches to contribute in making up the average of six feet. They were tireless workers and well skilled in the art of influencing their associates. They so arranged the removal of the capital to Springfield that it was firmly wedged into a combination of all the other schemes, and the bill for it was passed in the last hours of the session. It was an enduring piece of work, and the State is governed from that town at the present time.

Mr. Lincoln could now return to Sangamon County and New Salem with a consciousness that he had done for his enthusiastic constituents at least as much as they could reasonably expect of him. He had, however, done one thing more, and a greater and worthier thing than any success he had won as an advocate of internal improvement or the removal of the State capital. He had made a bold, clear record of his views upon the subject of human slavery.

The Legislature adjourned upon the 4th of March, and on the previous day, the 3d, with but one solitary comrade, Daniel Stone, Abraham Lincoln presented to the House, and had read and spread upon the journals of record, the following protest:

"Resolutions upon the subject of domestic slavery having

passed both branches of the General Assembly at its present session, the undersigned hereby protest against the passage of the same.

"They believe that the institution of slavery is founded on both injustice and bad policy; but that the promulgation of abolition doctrines tends rather to increase than to abate its evils.

"They believe that the Congress of the United States has no power, under the Constitution, to interfere with the institution of slavery in the different States.

"They believe that the Congress of the United States has the power, under the Constitution, to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, but that the power ought not to be exercised unless at the request of the people of the District.

"The difference between these opinions and those contained in the said resolutions is their reason for entering this protest.

"DAN. STONE,

"A. LINCOLN,

"Representatives from the county of Sangamon."

Only two men in that numerous body climbed high enough, at that time, or had the courage to declare that human slavery was "founded on injustice and bad policy," whatever might be their opinion of the force of the existing laws by which it was protected. It was a bold thing to do, in a day when to be an antislavery man, even at the North, was to be a sort of social outcast and political pariah. Twenty years were to roll away before a great party was to adopt, as its platform of principles, declarations nearly equivalent and but little more advanced than the brave protest in which Abraham Lincoln induced his friend Dan Stone to join him.

That was the first public fruit of the flatboat studies of human slavery away down the Mississippi River, and other views of it obtained in the slave-market at New Orleans. The necessary moral education for persisting in making such a record

had been received through "object-lessons," and the actual sight of slave and whip, and brand and fetters, and the barter and sale of human flesh and blood.

Lincoln had struck his first blow in the great warfare, and it was as hard a stroke as the occasion permitted. It was a registered prophecy that he would strike again in the fullness of time and when another opportunity should be given him.

## CHAPTER XVII.

## THE YOUNG LAWYER.

Admitted to the Bar—Honest Poverty—The Panic of 1837—Politics again  
—Matrimonial tendencies—Another Darkness.

UNDER every disadvantage and in spite of all manner of interruptions and hindrances, Mr. Lincoln steadily pursued the study of the law. Early in the year 1837 he was admitted to practice. He could not hope to build up a law business at New Salem, and at once removed to Springfield.

Here he soon formed a partnership with John P. Stuart, the same kind friend from whom he had borrowed law-books in the by-gone years, when he was glad to walk to Springfield for them and read them all the long walk home.

The young lawyer was still poor. He took his meals at the very respectable residence of Hon. William Butler, a political friend, but he slept on a narrow lounge in the law-office of Stuart & Lincoln, in the second story of the court-house building. He had debts to pay, and he was steadily, honestly paying them; not in any way wasting a dollar of other people's money. He was dealing with vast sums as a legislator, and the expenditure of these and the management of the many bubble schemes of the day were mixed and tainted with fraud, corruption, and bribery. Everybody knew this; but it was also known that the most active advocate of public improvement among the Illinois legislators could not afford to hire himself a small room in a Springfield boarding-house. The bitterest tongue of political detraction never ventured to assail his personal honor. Had any man been so silly as to question Lin-

coln's integrity, at that or any subsequent time, he would but have covered himself with derision.

The Springfield bar, in those days, numbered among its members many men of more than common ability. There were some, indeed, whose names were soon to be familiar to the whole country. It was not, therefore, because his competitors were few or weak that Lincoln rapidly advanced to a foremost position as a sound and able lawyer. From the outset he was compelled to fight his way against men every way capable of testing his powers to the uttermost, and there was none of them whose apparent educational advantages had not been greater than his own.

The year 1837 was marked in the history of the United States by the severest financial crisis the country had experienced since the close of the Revolutionary War. On the 10th of May the banks of New York suspended specie payments; and on the 12th the Bank of the United States and those of Philadelphia followed the example so set them. Fast and far the ruin spread in all directions. In July the Governor of Illinois called a special session of the State Legislature, to see if something could not be done for the epidemic bankruptcy by the passage of medicinal laws.

The first act which was passed had the effect of permitting all the banks in the State to suspend specie payments. Nothing was done, however, to prevent them issuing further paper promises to pay the money they did not have and could not hope to obtain. Neither was any step taken towards diminishing the current outlay for internal improvements. More loans were actually authorized, and the State went on floundering deeper and deeper into the Dismal Swamp of disaster prepared for it by its crazy people as represented by young Lincoln and all the other "De Witt Clintons of Illinois."

When all had been done that could be devised, the legislators from a distance went home to their constituents. There was no more mischief to be feared from them until another election

should call them together. Mr. Lincoln remained in Springfield, resuming what there was of his law practice and the slow process of wiping out his debts.

All idea of marrying Mary Owens seems to have left him early in 1838. Nothing more would ever have been heard of that affair if, in after-years, its futile record had not been disinterred too zealously from old letter-boxes and doubtful memories. One value of it now is the testimony so borne to the fact that not even his admitted abilities were as yet considered by many a social set-off to his gaunt, ungainly person, his awkward, unpolished manners, and the serious deficiencies of his early training and family connections. He had broken through every barrier but that of "caste." That, too, was yet to go down before him, and he was one day to take his seat, uncrowned indeed, but throned, among the kings of the earth.

It was nearly a matter of course that Mr. Lincoln should be again elected to the Legislature in 1838; and when that body came together he was the candidate of the Whig party for Speaker of the House. The Democratic nominee, Mr. Ewing, was elected by a small majority; but the unquestioned leadership won by Lincoln at so early a day is worthy of especial notice. The same honorable nomination was given him by his party in the succeeding Legislature, and with the same foregone result, for the Democrats were in power.

In that year, 1840, occurred one of the most remarkable of American political campaigns, resulting in the election of General Harrison as President of the United States. Mr. Lincoln was a candidate for Presidential Elector on the Whig ticket, and he "stumped" a large part of the State in company and contest with the leading orators of the opposite party.

For the first time his reputation became other than somewhat local, and his tall form began to be familiar to the eyes of the general public of Illinois. Once seen, once heard, there was no danger that he would ever be forgotten. Prior to that

date he had done something as a lecturer, but only within a narrow circle of small audiences.

He was now approaching a second crisis of his moral and emotional nature, and one which proved to be terribly severe.

Among his especial friends in Springfield were Mr. Ninian Edwards and his family. Mrs. Edwards was a daughter of Hon. Robert S. Todd of Lexington, Kentucky, and her sister Mary, a bright, witty, and handsome young woman, came to reside with her at about the time of the removal of the State capital to Springfield, in the year 1839.

Mr. Lincoln found himself constantly thrown into the society of a well-educated, cheerful, and in some respects fascinating young lady. It was not long before he began to listen to the suggestions of her friends and his own that he had better marry Mary Todd. He deeply felt his utter loneliness. The idea of a home had a charm that was all its own, for that was a gift which had hitherto been denied him. Miss Todd herself, though from a family of much pretension to "position," had a keen perception of the ability and worth of the rising young lawyer. He was poor; he was fettered and clogged by many disadvantages of person, manner, education, history; but she was a young woman of more than ordinary penetration and good sense. She saw that here was a man worthy of any woman, and her mind speedily settled itself in his favor with a firmness which was afterwards proof against all trials. It was not long before a formal betrothal resulted. He was by no means her only suitor, but had rivals for her favor whose worldly prospects, as compared with his own, relieve Miss Todd of any imputation that she was influenced in her choice by mere ambition. It is said that at one time, being asked which of her admirers, Lincoln or Douglas, she preferred, she laughingly replied, "The one that has the best chance of being President." It is amusing enough now to note how some men look back gravely to that merry conversation and accuse the lively Kentucky girl of exercising the gift of prophecy, instead



of consulting her own heart, in deciding between two active young politicians in a new-born Western State.

Lincoln was now engaged to be married, and his purpose might have drifted smoothly onward to fulfillment if it had not been for the arrival of yet another member of the Edwards family. This was a Miss Matilda Edwards, the sister of his friend. She was very fair, and quickly became the reigning belle of Springfield. Mr. Lincoln saw much of her and felt drawn towards her irresistibly. She had a secret to unfold to him; an unveiling of his inner life to perform for him. What might be her mission he did not know or understand for a while. He even imagined the emotion now stirring within him to be a love for Miss Edwards, although he never told her so. Looking upon her face, however, he discovered that he was not in love with Miss Todd, and that his engagement with the latter was based upon no better foundation than respect, admiration, and a keen sense of his own need of a wife and home. Upon that discovery followed another like an electric shock, and he went at once to Miss Todd to offer her a release from her engagement. Had her heart been as lightly bound as his, there could have been but one result; but the interview did not end in a release. The young man's keen sense of honor was in the way of that, and this was reinforced by a deeper, stronger, sadder consideration. He could not confide to her the real reason of his apparent change, although he could freely disavow any intention or hope of obtaining Miss Edwards. But for this, indeed, jealousy would have come to the quick and somewhat fiery spirit of Miss Todd, and Lincoln would have been spared a part, at least, of the sharp agony in store for him. He went away, carrying his secret with him, and the wedding-day was set. All things were made ready, even to the setting forth of the marriage-feast; but when the hour appointed came, it did not bring the bridegroom.

The brain whose steady strength had already found a place among the best-trained intellects of the West—sustained as was

that brain by a bodily frame of the most extraordinary power and by a will of iron—had once more been swept into temporary ruin as by a hurricane of passionate sorrow. His discovery was that all the heart and love he had, or ever could have, lay buried on the bank of the Sangamon, in the grave of Ann Rutledge.

Lincoln was positively demented—morbidly, gloomily insane. He was equally unfit for marriage, for society, for business. Once more he was indebted to a faithful friend for the care and watching he stood in need of. He never had one wiser and more true than Mr. J. F. Speed. This gentleman, then a resident and merchant of Springfield, was closing up his business there, and early in January, 1841, he removed to a new home in Kentucky, carrying Lincoln with him.

Complete cessation of mental toil; severance from too suggestive surroundings of places and persons; with the firm, judicious management of friends in whom he put utter confidence, gave the disordered intellect of the smitten man its best opportunity for restoration to health. Month after month went by, however, before it was deemed safe to trust him back among his dangers. Spring and summer and part of the autumn passed away, and with them a whole session of the Legislature to which he had been elected. Then he returned. But he was not yet altogether himself. He kept the secret of the agony which had overpowered him, but his mind still vacillated strangely concerning his matrimonial engagement. Miss Todd's friends at one time urged her to give him up. At another they seem to have given her directly opposite counsel. So did the friends of Lincoln and of both for him. The two met and met again, but there is no record that at any time there was a sign of a change of purpose in Mary Todd. It is not well to speak or think lightly of such womanly faith and constancy as this. She loved him, trusted him, and she continually drew him to her more and more nearly and irrevocably.

On his return to Springfield, Mr. Lincoln at once resumed

his law-practice and plunged again into politics. Habitually gloomy as his face had grown to be, he did not wear his heart upon his sleeve. He took his part with energy in all the affairs of the day. It was well, too, for his mental health, to be brought so continually in contact with a high-spirited and fun-loving girl like Mary Todd.

In the course of the following year a merry prank of hers ended in a serious scrape for him.

Miss Todd was mistress of a somewhat biting style of satire, and enjoyed the application of it highly. It even led her to the occasional contribution of political lampoons to the Springfield newspapers. As a matter of course, Mr. Lincoln was admitted to the secret of the authorship of these "Letters from the Lost Townships," and he may have aided in the preparation of one or more of them.

Among the rising politicians of Illinois, at that time, was a young Irish gentleman, James Shields, afterwards to be famous as a soldier and political leader, but whose quick temper and sensitiveness to ridicule rendered him a dangerous target for the mischievous archery of Mary Todd.

Letter after letter appeared in "The Sangamon Journal," hitting harder and harder, until Mr. Shields could endure no longer, and sent a friend to the editor demanding the author's name.

The editor, placed in a somewhat awkward position, revealed a half-truth by giving to the messenger, General Whiteside, the name of Abraham Lincoln.

A peppery and offensive communication was at once written by Mr. Shields to Mr. Lincoln, eliciting a dignified but unsatisfactory reply, and a challenge to fight a duel speedily followed. The "code of honor," as it was the absurd fashion to describe the system of fantastic rules regulating that form of deliberate murder, was then in full force in the West. Even those who perceived its insanity and hated its brutality had not yet learned to repudiate its hellish authority.

It seemed therefore necessary for Mr. Lincoln to accept the challenge. Then it was needful that the friends of both parties should solemnly ruffle through the customary correspondence, public and private. There were the usual interviews, misunderstandings, delicate points of honor, and all the other doings and undoings which make the duelist ridiculous. At last the very place of meeting was agreed upon, three miles from Alton, Illinois, but on the Missouri shore of the Mississippi River. The weapons selected were "cavalry broadswords of the largest size," and the idea of being hacked at with such a cleaver by a man of Lincoln's size and strength could hardly have been a pleasant one for Mr. James Shields.

It was very much a matter of course that the seconds, surgeons, mutual friends, and other members of the customary mob of assistants at such an affair managed to patch the matter up in time to prevent the use of the broadswords, and afterwards the truth gradually leaked out as to the authorship of the "Letters from the Lost Townships." Mr. Lincoln did not fight the duel, and the larger share of the ridicule attached to Mr. Shields, but it remained a sore subject to the former ever afterwards.

The arrangements for not fighting had been somewhat elaborate, and had dragged on through all the latter part of September and into October. Right along with them, and, as it seemed, somewhat hand-in-hand, a more important result had been preparing.

On the 4th of November Mr. Lincoln was married to Mary Todd.

The young couple went into very respectable quarters, boarding at the Globe Tavern, where they were compelled to pay the then good price of four dollars a week. The bridegroom was finally out of debt, but he was still poor and had never cultivated the faculty of making money. He was henceforth to have a helpmeet who would see to it that his finances were kept in better order; but even Mrs. Lincoln perpetually failed

in her efforts to induce him to make a proper use of his business advantages.

Mr. Lincoln's mind had now recovered health and tone and the calm strength which it never again lost. He was as hard a student as ever, both of books and men, and his professional reputation was increasing. He was once more the life and soul of political movements and party organizations. There was no danger that his ambition would be permitted to slumber, with a wife at his elbow who fully believed in his capacity for almost any earthly achievement, and whose own political faculties were much more than ordinary.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

## MANHOOD.

**AN Honest Lawyer—A Storm—The Henry Clay Campaign—The Old Cabin—Partnerships—Coarse and Fine—Elected Congressman—The Mexican War—President Making—The Pro-Slavery Formula—Southern Friendships.**

NEITHER politics nor social nor domestic interests prevented Mr. Lincoln from giving careful and laborious attention to his professional duties. On the 3d of December, 1839, he was admitted to practice in the Circuit Court of the United States. His presentation of his first case in that court stands all alone in the annals of the law. He arose and addressed the bench as follows:

“This is the first case I have ever had in this court, and I have therefore examined it with great care. As the Court will perceive by looking at the abstract of the record, the only question in this case is one of authority. I have not been able to find any authority sustaining my side of the case, but I have found several cases directly in point on the other side. I will now give these cases and then submit the case.”

The courage, candor, simple honor, required for such an utterance, working out afterwards in all he said or did, before judges and juries, gave him a power with them which was peculiarly his own. Men cannot fail to be influenced by the truth-seeking argument of an advocate in whose integrity they are compelled by him to repose unquestioning confidence.

There were cases brought to him which he could not and would not touch. No possible fee would induce him to be-



come the instrument of injustice under cover of legal form and merely technical right.

A few months after Mr. Lincoln's marriage an active canvass began within the limits of the Whig party as to who should be its candidate for Congressman from the Sangamon district. The prospect for an election by the people was very good, and there were several gentlemen whose friends were hotly urging their respective claims. Mr. Lincoln earnestly desired the nomination, but now, for the first time in his political career, he found himself assailed upon purely personal grounds. It would hardly have answered the purposes of his rivals to attack him for his low origin before a community among whom such an assault would but have added to his popularity. He could, on the other hand, be accused of having deserted the cause of the common people by marrying an "aristocratic" wife. All good men who believed the Bible could be told that he was a deist or an infidel. At the same time, members of the more numerous sects could be assured that he was an Episcopalian or a Presbyterian, with equal recklessness of the fact that he was neither. Nothing was forgotten or neglected which could be remembered or invented against him, and he was compelled to bend before the storm. He withdrew his name at last in favor of Mr. E. D. Baker, and that gentleman was both nominated and elected to the Twenty-ninth Congress. He received, throughout the canvass, the active support of the defeated aspirant.

In the year 1844, Mr. Lincoln's political idol, Henry Clay, was nominated by the Whigs for the Presidency, and Lincoln was once more named as a candidate for Presidential Elector. He threw himself into the campaign with all his energy, and was bitterly disappointed by the defeat of his party and its great representative. He made many speeches in Illinois, but the most notable part of his work, that year, came to him in Indiana. The course of his campaign appointments carried him to Gentryville and its neighborhood. He made three



speeches within a few miles, one of them within two miles, of the log-cabin his father had built so many years before. The country had vastly changed, and so had its inhabitants, but not so much as had the barefooted boy who shivered under the "pole-shelter" that first winter.

While in the middle of his speech at Gentryville, he espied an old boy-friend and neighbor, Nat Grigsby, far back among his hearers. The argument suddenly stopped and the orator sprang down from the platform, urging his way through the crowd and exclaiming, "There's Nat!" Not till after a good shake of the hand and a hearty word about old times with Nat did the gathered voters hear the rest of Lincoln's plea on behalf of Henry Clay.

Nat and nearly all the rest of the children of the early settlers of the Pigeon Creek forests were still, except for the lapse of time, living at the earthy level upon which they had been born. Their original advantages had been at least as good, and in many instances had been much better, than those of Abraham Lincoln. He, however, had so grown and so departed from that level of human life, during the thirteen years since he toiled on foot from the woods of Indiana to the prairies of Illinois, that now there was a great gulf between him and them.

Other eyes could discern the abyss of separation more clearly than could those of "the orator of the day." He insisted on going with Nat Grigsby to pay a visit to the same Mr. Jones, in Gentryville, for whom he had performed his earliest service as clerk. He made it a merry time, apparently, and he met all old and new acquaintances with the heartiest cordiality. The uses of fun and humor as a mask of his inner man were already only too familiar to him. It was well for him, then and afterwards, that he possessed so excellent a shield.

In the shadows of the woods near Gentryville there were many graves. Among them were those of Lincoln's own mother and sister. The very woods themselves were a sort of

burial-ground for the strange, hard, unchildlike childhood out of whose hunger and thirst and nakedness of soul and body he had grown to his present stature. He could not look upon the log-cabin of his earlier days without understanding that some of the precious treasures of human life had been denied him. His very capacity for reading and so for leading the coarse and sordid men and women around him told of a side of his being that was born and bred with him and that never could or would be polished away. The capacity was needful, was invaluable, but it had cost something. If it had been possible, and if he had chiseled his character away to a finer model, more in accord with conventional standards of human perfection, all these important elements of American life would have missed finding their own image in him. Failing that, the people would have refused him the strong, instinctive confidence and love which finally flowed to him and enabled him to bind the hearts of a nation together as one man, and in one man, in the hour of the nation's trial.

It is a curious fact that, now, it is among the same people, educated or uneducated, whether nominally high or low, rich or poor, but who personally knew Lincoln so very well in those old days, we hear the one faint and grumbling negation of his greatness. In the language of one prairie-farmer, unconsciously speaking for many: "Wal, no. Linkern wasn't so much of a man. I knowed him. He lived out this away. I've seen him a heap o' times. His folks was torn-down poor. Reckon they wouldn't ha' made sech a fuss about him ef he hadn't been shot. That helped him powerful. I knowed him."

After the defeat of Henry Clay there was little to be done in politics until another campaign, and the life Mr. Lincoln led was necessarily a quiet one. He followed the movements of the courts from place to place, establishing his hard-earned reputation more and more firmly, and beginning to reap a harvest of fees which was wealth to a man of his simple tastes and inexpensive habits. He was now able to do something for

his beloved "mother," for his shiftless, improvident father, and for quite a long list of his early friends. He had, however, the good sense not to go too far in this direction, and he then and afterwards refused to take upon his own shoulders the burden of carrying sundry altogether too willing dependents. Such of his communications to these and others as have been preserved exhibit a praiseworthy disposition to help even chronic indolence to help itself, but not to go much beyond that line. It was a matter of course that the persons aided, always excepting his sound-minded stepmother, entertained wider and more liberal views of what should be done for them by a man upon whom they held the strong claim that they had known him when he was as poor as themselves. In their minds, justice required that what they called his "luck" should be divided around among the easy-going mob who had sat so very still while he was toiling for it.

Mr. Lincoln's first law-partnership, with John T. Stuart, which began in 1837, was dissolved in 1841, in consequence of Mr. Stuart's election to Congress. His second partnership, with Stephen T. Logan, began in 1841 and lasted until 1845. Shortly afterwards he associated with him Mr. William H. Herndon, with whom his relations continued to the very end. These were, from the beginning, more near than those of mere business partners. The greater part of all that the world knows of Mr. Lincoln's early life has been gathered and preserved by the affectionate diligence of his devoted friend. It goes almost without saying that Mr. Herndon stood too near the man he loved to form a just estimate of him as compared with other men, or to correctly discern some features of his character which required to be studied from a greater distance.

It was not until some time after Mr. Lincoln began to "ride the circuit" that he was able to do so on a horse or in a buggy of his own; but whatever borrowed beast or vehicle brought him to any county-seat, he was sure to be welcomed by court and bar as the life of all social gatherings. Among his profes-

sional associates, more freely and completely than elsewhere, he could come out from his clouds and vapors and give vent to the keen but quiet humor which might have made a cheerful man of him but that so heavy a load was laid upon him continually.

There was little refinement of thought or speech among those Western lawyers or their clients. There had been none at all of either in the rough schools through which Mr. Lincoln had received his education. He had his finer side; fine even to sensitiveness, and tender to an extreme capacity for suffering; but he did not cast the pearls of this before the swine of a miscellaneous "court-house crowd." As they were, so was he, for the hour; exhibiting to them, in careless freedom and good-fellowship, only such stores of wisdom, wit, or anecdote as were suited to the average taste, morality, and brain of those who listened. It was a way in life by no means peculiar to him, and it was gradually worn from him in the sharp and hard attrition of his later days. It is a very feeble-minded error to suppose that even the richest vein of gold is naturally free from dross, or that its treasure is fitted for the mint before it has passed through the crushing-mill, the furnace, and been subjected to the subtle and searching arts of the refiner. There was much dross in the mind and in the speech of Abraham Lincoln in those days of close contact with the crime, meanness, fraud, chicanery, and pollution of a mixed law-practice among the new settlements of Illinois; but there was very little dross of any kind in his heart, and out of this his mouth was sure to speak more and more as time went on.

In the year 1846 there was again a sharp contest over the nomination of a candidate for Congressman by the Whig party in the Sangamon district. It was speedily reduced to a competition between the sitting member, General Hardin, and Mr. Lincoln, and, as early as February 26th, the former withdrew in favor of the new aspirant. The regular nomination was made in the following May, and both before it and afterwards

the personal record of the candidate was searched for all its vulnerable points. His supposed religious convictions were assailed all the more bitterly because his political opponent in the campaign was Peter Cartwright, an eccentric but popular preacher of the Methodist persuasion. The effort to make the contest one between saint and sinner broke down altogether, and Mr. Lincoln was elected by an uncommonly large majority.

He had thus attained a long-sought object of his ambition, and there were great reasons, not in any man's mind then, why a term of service in Congress was especially needful to him. The honor cost him a high price. His law-practice must suffer seriously, in spite of all that could be done in his absence by Mr. Herndon. Separation from home was inevitable, for his circumstances did not permit that he should take his young and growing family with him to Washington. Robert, his first-born child, was beginning to talk and run around the house; but his second, Willy, was still a babe in arms, having been born on the 10th of March in that year.

Mr. Lincoln's position in that Congress, the Thirtieth, as the only Whig member from the State of Illinois, had its peculiar difficulties and responsibilities. It had its unpleasant features as well as its honors. It gave him a certain exceptional influence and weight with Whig statesmen from other parts of the country, and in a manner vastly widened his constituency at home. At the same time it was obvious that no other man could be more sure of careful watching by political opponents. The least misstep was certain to be made the most of against him. He understood it all, and then, so understanding, he deliberately went forward to make, one after the other, the precise missteps his most bitter critics would have asked of him. He was a politician, truly, but he was a great deal more; and it was no wonder, at the end of the Thirtieth Congress, that he should be looked upon as a ruined man, in whose face the gates of further advancement had been closed by his own reckless hand.

The House was organized on the 6th of December, 1847, Mr. Lincoln being given a place on the Committee on Post Offices and Post Roads. His first speech, a short one, was made in connection with the business of that committee, and he wrote to Mr. Herndon that he found it as easy to speak in Congress as elsewhere.

The great topics of the hour were the Mexican War and the extension of Slavery, the two being interwoven, and both calling for constant discussion in many forms.

From his own convictions and as a representative of the Whig party, Mr. Lincoln was opposed to the war with Mexico. As early as the 22d of December he offered a preamble and resolutions setting forth his views of the varied wrongs involved in the course pursued by the administration of President Polk in the current dispute with the weak, chaotic republic beyond the Rio Grande. The war was soon to become popular by reason of the military glory won by the army, and Mr. Lincoln's advocacy of the weak against the strong lost to him and to his party the greater portion of his political strength in Illinois. He made a somewhat elaborate speech in behalf of his resolutions on the 12th of January, 1848, but it was all too late to stem the tide of war. All that any politician could do, in or out of Congress, was to put himself in such a position that he would surely be swept away by the flood of popular passion. Like other Whigs, Mr. Lincoln voted for requisite supplies for the army in the field. It is even noteworthy how close is the analogy between his position with reference to the Mexican war and that afterwards held by many conscientious Democrats with reference to the war for the Union. It goes far to explain the mutual confidence which existed, at the latter period, between him and them; and the country was the gainer.

While the war lasted it was exceedingly popular, but the sure reaction from its fierce excitement temporarily crippled the party which was responsible for it. Nevertheless, the



political chiefs who had most actively opposed it were not at once available candidates for political honors. Mr. Lincoln saw clearly that not himself only but such men as Henry Clay, Daniel Webster, and all the old-time Whig giants must be set aside. That men accustomed to control should fail to appreciate a necessity so disagreeable was every way natural, and their friends with keener perceptions were compelled to bestir themselves in time. It was needful that a Whig Presidential candidate should be fixed upon in advance of the Whig National Convention if one was to be offered with any prospect of an election by the people. There did not really seem to be more than one man who met the requirements of the political situation. General Zachary Taylor was the hero of some of the hardest-fought battles of the war, and he probably possessed as much statesmanship as falls to the lot of most good military commanders. A respectable lawyer from Western New York, Millard Fillmore, was given the second place on the ticket. Nobody knew enough about either of these gentlemen to say a word against them, and Taylor's war-record was full of political campaign material. Mr. Lincoln took an active part in arranging its business beforehand for the National Convention. He attended its formal meeting at Philadelphia on the 1st of June, assisted in placing the candidates upon the platform of principles constructed for them, and then returned to Washington to finish his work as a member of Congress.

On the 20th of June he delivered in the House a speech upon his favorite subject of internal improvement. On the 27th of July following he again spoke in an argument which embraced the entire field of the Presidential election and the leading political issues of the day. The most interesting feature of this speech is the plainness with which it sets forth Mr. Lincoln's unalterable opposition to slavery. He could not and did not offensively formulate it then and there. If his opinions were at all in advance of those held at the time by a large part of the Whig party in the Northern States, a wise



care for the results of the pending election forbade their utterance. He was cautious, but proslavery men were by no means either blinded or satisfied by such moderation in him or in others. They well understood that all opposition to the "extension of slavery" had for its source and foundation a hatred of human bondage for its own sake. It was easy for them, in their heated imaginations, to transfer that rooted hatred to themselves and to assume that it could not but be personal. They promptly adjusted themselves to that interpretation of all such utterances as those of Mr. Lincoln. They were men whose habits of life, of thought and action, forbade them to flinch from any issue presented. They were both able and courageous, and they ruled the country thereafter for twenty years by the mere presentation of the bold formula: "If you hate slavery, you hate us. If you desire to kill it, your real purpose is to murder the people of the South."

Congress adjourned on the 14th of August, and Mr. Lincoln went to New England on a brief tour of political speech-making. This was his first opportunity for acquiring any personal acquaintance with modes of life in the Eastern States. Except for what study he had made of Yankee settlers in the West, he was entirely ignorant concerning a population which was yet to give him its very heart. He was, however, a student accustomed to learn rapidly the contents of the human pages brought before him. He could not possibly fail to profit by such an experience of contact and observation.

The second session of the Thirtieth Congress did little or nothing for the reputation of Mr. Lincoln. He voted with his party, now in brief control of the House. He even offered a bill for compensated emancipation of slaves held in the District of Columbia, but it died the natural death of all such propositions in those days. Somewhat curiously, he made more and more lasting new friendships among Southern representative men than Northern. It was as if some subtle instinct bade him seek and study them, telling him the importance of his

acquiring a knowledge of them and an understanding through them of the people who sent them to Congress. Some of these friendships, as that with Mr. Stephens, of Georgia, came to the surface as political factors and powers in subsequent emergencies. His correspondence with Mr. Herndon during all this period exhibits his undiminished interest in his home affairs. It also shows that he was subject to all the minor annoyances and perplexities of a member of Congress, including the pertinacities of office-seekers and the carping criticism of personal friends. There was really no reason why he should be anxious for a re-election, and there were many good reasons why he should not openly seek for one. Of these, perhaps the best, in his judgment, was the absolute certainty of defeat at the polls if he should be nominated.

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## CHAPTER XIX.

## THE COMING CONFLICT.

Office Refused—The Missouri Compromise—A Sure Prophecy—Inner Life  
—Ripening—Death of Tom Lincoln—A Written Confession of Faith.

MR. LINCOLN would willingly have continued in Congress if such a thing had been politically possible; but it was not. Among other obstacles appears to have been some sort of an informal understanding between him and other Whig leaders of central Illinois aiming at a rotation among them of the honor of representing the Sangamon district. The nomination fell to Lincoln's friend, Judge Logan, but he received it only to meet the sure defeat prepared for him by the anti-war and antislavery record of his predecessor. The latter at this juncture of his affairs made an effort to obtain from the new Whig administration the appointment of Commissioner of the General Land Office at Washington. It was probably at that time the one public employment which would have offered him opportunities for furthering his internal-improvement schemes. The national landed property, always large, had been greatly increased by the results of the war with Mexico. It was impossible that Lincoln's mind should not turn with ideas and projects relating to the future use and occupation of areas so vast and so full of all the prophecies of empire.

The coveted post was given to another citizen of Illinois, and Mr. Lincoln was offered in its stead the governorship of Oregon Territory. He was urged by his friends to take the appointment, on the ground that Oregon would soon be a State and would thus send him to the United States Senate. It was a tempting bait, but all the reply he made was that he

would accept if Mrs. Lincoln approved. The question was duly submitted to her, and her refusal was equally absolute and prompt. She would not let her husband bury himself again in the wilds of another new country, and he acted upon her wifely advice, returning with all his accustomed vigor to his sadly run-down and neglected legal practice.

The Eighth Judicial District was territorially large, including fourteen prairie counties. To each of the several county-seats Mr. Lincoln traveled twice in each year. Each circuit required nearly three months, and not much more than half of any year could be spent quietly at home by an active practitioner. In the intervals of these unavoidable absences Lincoln's home grew very dear to him. His habits were simple and domestic to the last degree, and his fondness for his children was one of his most deeply marked characteristics. His wife was utterly devoted to him. His widening circle of friends grew more and more attached and trusting, and his affairs were eminently prosperous. His position was hardly second to that of any other man in the State, and it seemed that he had already won every success in life which could reasonably be aspired to by the son of an Indiana settler, a "poor white" from Kentucky.

He himself was anything but satisfied. He was still aspiring, studying, preparing, growing. He carried with him upon the circuit other books than those which treated of the law. Copies of Shakespeare, historical works, mathematical school text-books, were his frequent companions. He was still pursuing in his ripe manhood the tireless process of education which he had begun with a piece of charcoal and a wooden fire-shovel.

He was much sought after as a "counsel for the defendant" in criminal cases, although his noted power over a jury passed away from him at once if he himself believed his client to be guilty. In one such case that is recorded he remarked to his associate counsel :

"If you can say anything for the man, do it. I can't. If I attempt, the jury will see that I think he is guilty and convict him of course."

The other lawyers followed their chief's example; the case was submitted without argument; and the jury, unassisted by any "confession" from Abraham Lincoln, failed to agree upon a verdict.

In a similar case, years later, in Champaign County, a man was on trial for murder. Mr. Lincoln was employed to defend him, assisted by Leonard Swett. The prosecution was conducted by Ward H. Lamon and Judge Ficklin; and when they had done their duty, the prisoner's leading counsel was convinced of his guilt.

"Swett," said he, "the man is guilty. You defend him. I can't."

Mr. Swett, only less effective before a jury than Mr. Lincoln himself, made the remaining fight so well that his client was acquitted; but his associate refused to take any part of the fee that was paid for the work he had refused to do.

There are many anecdotes told of Lincoln's professional readiness, wit, learning, capacity, eloquence, but few afford any better knowledge of the real life of the man. He was inwardly advancing to a higher stature of mind and soul than was required for the winning of a succession of court-room victories over the arts of opposing counsel and over the minds of petty juries. Not as a mere lawyer, of what rank and power soever, was his name to go down to future generations. Still it is well to be assured that in these duties as in all others he was notably capable and faithful.

Questions of national importance were now beginning to stir more and more powerfully in his conscience and in his heart as the fruits of his Congressional experience slowly ripened. Long before going to Washington, he had been sent to look with open eyes upon some aspects of the slave-life of the Southern States. While in Congress he had studied and

understood the men who excused, defended, or glorified the laws and institutions by which that life was created and continued in existence.

It was not difficult for any thoughtful man to comprehend, in part at least, the purposes and plans of the advocates of slavery, for they were even brutally frank in many of their public declarations. They had to the uttermost the courage of their convictions, and they shrank from no part or issue or consequence of the work to which they had set themselves. Mr. Lincoln understood fully now their courage, their activity, their great intellectual ability. He saw with equal clearness the sluggish cowardice of all the opposition to their will, which had as yet a position to make itself effective. He knew men, and had analyzed the processes through which their slow thoughts and feelings are developed into purposes and pass on into express action. He was watching these processes with intense interest. In the year 1850, in a conversation with his friend and former law-partner, Mr. Stuart, he said :

"The time will come when we must all be Democrats or Abolitionists. When that time comes my mind is made up. The slavery question can't be compromised."

"So is my mind made up," replied Mr. Stuart; but it was that he would be no Abolitionist.

The very thing Mr. Lincoln said could not be done was now attempted. Shallow thinkers said it had been done, by the so-called "Compromise Measures of 1850," whether regarded merely as laws or as a species of social contract. These, it may be well to recall, admitted Missouri without restriction as to Slavery, and at the same time prohibited Slavery forever in the new territory west of Missouri and north of the latitude  $36^{\circ}30'$ —the southern boundary line of that State. This "Missouri Compromise" did indeed arise to the dignity of a hollow and fraudulent political truce. So long as the fetters it sought to impose retained their fictitious binding power there was no fitting place in politics for men like Abraham Lincoln. The



condition of his mind with reference to all this matter is admirably set forth by Mr. Herndon :

“Mr. Lincoln and I were going to Petersburg, in 1850, I think. The political world was dead: the compromises of 1850 seemed to have settled the negro’s fate. Things were stagnant, and all hope for progress in the line of freedom seemed to be crushed out. Lincoln was speculating with me about the deadness of things and the despair which arose out of it, and deeply regretting that his human strength and power were limited by his nature to rouse and stir up the world. He said gloomily, despairingly, sadly: ‘How hard, oh, how hard it is to die and leave one’s country no better than if one had never lived for it! The world is dead to hope, deaf to its own death-struggle, made known by a universal cry. What is to be done? Is anything to be done? Who can do anything? And how is it to be done? Did you ever think of these things?’”

It was a grand utterance; and the world can understand it now, and can also understand by help of it what forces were at work behind the sad face of the man who was yet to answer effectively the fierce questionings of his own despairing cry. The world of 1850 was not the world of to-day. There have been vast convulsions and wonderful changes in every part of it since then, and every change and every convulsion which has taken place began in the hearts of men who had in some measure received, like Lincoln, the priceless gifts of thinking and seeing and suffering.

Men who heard him at times—men like Herndon, who was a sincere Abolitionist—could and did wonder why the man who felt so deeply and spoke so strongly did not at once break out into some species of agitation. Other men were so doing here and there, and were bravely performing the work of pioneers in the cause of freedom. Lincoln also was doing the work allotted him, and his zealous friends were unable to see that his time for something different had not yet come. He



understood, rather than saw, the unadvisability of present activity on his part. It was nothing to him that other men, such as in after-time mistook themselves and their frantic outeries for causes instead of effervescent effects, were all the while hurling anathemas at any who might dare await the coming fullness of time. It had not come, and he would bravely wait.

The great mass of American citizens went somewhat stolidly on with their plowing and planting, their merchandise, their politics,—such as they thought they could understand,—and their religions, such as they had.

The fullness of time came, and with it the man who had ripened with it for the work of the great harvest; but even now, after the work is done and he has passed on out of the field, there still remain those who look back to the year 1850, and even later, and try to persuade themselves and others: "At that time Mr. Lincoln's mind was not made up. He was no further advanced then than we ourselves were."

By others somewhat this sort of comment has been freely made: "He and the other politicians were ready enough to reap the harvest we had sown and tilled for them. The new political world was created by us and we put into it the men, like Lincoln, whom we manufactured out of the dust of the earth. We blew into them all the life they ever had."

Mr. Lincoln's determination to abstain from current politics was so firm, that when in that very year the nomination for Congress was again offered him, he positively and publicly declined it. It is very possible that he could have been elected, as all personal opposition to him had ebbed away. But there was little to be then accomplished at Washington which could not just as well be done by other men. Moreover, the sacrifice of professional and domestic interests and ties would then have been greater than before.

His father's health began to fail towards the close of 1850, and Mr. Lincoln took care that his last days should be provided for in every needful way. It was also just before the birth of

little "Tad," and there were other reasons which forbade a prolonged absence from Springfield.

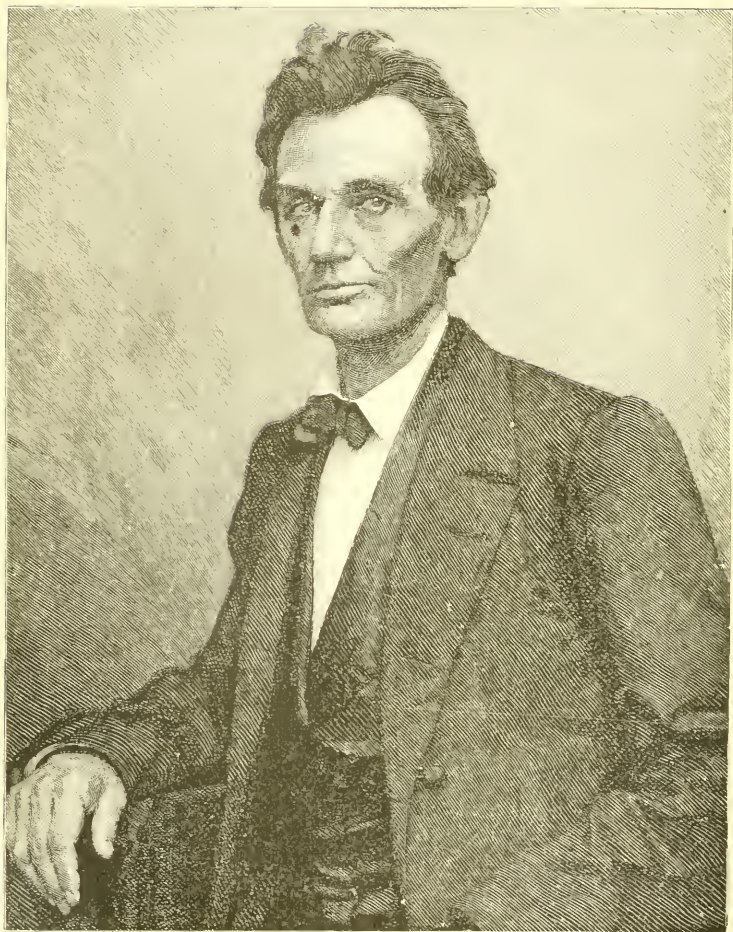
As for Thomas Lincoln, it is pleasant to know how tenderly and kindly the poor old shiftless Kentucky ne'er-do-well was cared for upon his death-bed by his faithful son. Mr. Lincoln wrote to his step-brother, John Johnston, a letter which closes with the following sentences :

"I sincerely hope father may yet recover his health ; but at all events tell him to remember to call upon and confide in our great and good and merciful Maker, who will not turn away from him in any extremity. He notes the fall of the sparrow and numbers the hairs of our heads ; and He will not forget the dying man who puts his trust in Him. Say to him that, if we could meet now, it is doubtful whether it would not be more painful than pleasant ; but that if it be his lot to go now, he will soon have a joyful meeting with loved ones gone before, and where the rest of us, through the mercy of God, hope ere long to join them."

These utterances, too, may well stand as an answer to those who tried to make the thoughtful man responsible for the raw infidelity of the thinking youth. This faith in the fatherhood of God, and his later manifestations of positive belief in the brotherhood of man, are not far from obedience to the great commandments on which, said Jesus, "hang all the law and the prophets."

After his father's death, as before, Mr. Lincoln continued his kind offices to his step-mother, and to other members of the family, although some of the latter took a course in life which reflected small credit upon her or him. He probably did as much for all of them as was in any manner well or worth while.





*A. Lincoln*

*From Photograph taken immediately after Nomination, 1860.*

## CHAPTER XX.

## A GREAT AWAKENING.

Colonization—The Kansas-Nebraska Act—The Barriers Broken Down—  
Lincoln's First Great Speech—Stephen A. Douglas—Growth of a New  
Party—Discovering a Leader—An Oratorical Match.

IN July, 1852, Mr. Lincoln was selected by the citizens of Springfield to deliver a funeral oration upon Henry Clay. He performed the public duty allotted him, but with an absence of enthusiasm for his old political idol which occasioned remark. It need not have surprised any who knew him well. He had that upon his mind which forbade his rising to any unusual height of eloquence in dealing with the memory of a statesman whose sun had set behind the clouds of "compromise" of the slavery question. The only noteworthy feature of the address is its bewildered agreement with Mr. Clay's idea of the colonization of the black people in Africa as a possible remedy for existing evils. Clearly foreseeing the awful perils into which the country was drifting; discovering no possibility of emancipation upon the soil of the United States; regarding the continued presence of such a population as a danger to the future welfare of the whites, both of the North and South—all the threatening images with which his inner thought was turning goaded him on in a search which seemed hopeless. In such a state of mind, the vain chimera of a wholesale transportation of the apparent cause of the coming strife and misery to other lands took hold of him with a power which would have been impossible had any alternative proposition been presented. It clung to him for years with a pertinacity which is not at all wonderful, but which is not easy

of explanation to minds which have not had the same problems to deal with.

During the same year Mr. Lincoln made a speech at Springfield, in commentary upon one delivered by Stephen A. Douglas at Richmond, Virginia. Like other ephemeral utterances it has little interest now.

The minor features of the slow movement of national politics in the years preceding the great collision have passed out of sight. It was regarded by some, at that time, as an act of presumption for Mr. Lincoln to assume such an attitude of equality with "the little giant of Illinois."

To Mr. Douglas, however, the whole country was soon to be indebted for an act of servility to the slave-power which set free the forces for a time bound down by the compromises of 1850. The bill afterwards known in history as "The Kansas-Nebraska Act," in its complete form, was reported to the Senate of the United States on the 23d of January, 1854, by Mr. Douglas, as Chairman of the Committee on Territories.

The Act provided for the creation of the Territories of Kansas and Nebraska out of the immense area then bearing the latter name. It removed the safeguards and ignored the solemn compact provided by the Missouri Compromise, and left the people of these or any other Territories, or a temporary majority vote of them, empowered to admit or reject human slavery, subject only to the Constitution of the United States, in which there was then no specific barrier. In no other way could the impending peril have been placed before the public in a shape so easily understood. All mere theories were out of date in an instant, when the propagandists of bondage said to the nation: "Here are two new States to be organized. They must be Slave-States. We have broken down the fence agreed upon between you and us. You shall not put up any more."

The people as a whole were slow in dividing upon the new issue so presented. The Democratic party, North and South,



was wonderfully vigorous and in perfect discipline, and it held the Federal government, with all its machinery of administration, in a grasp of iron. The Whig party was in process of disintegration; dying because it had nothing to live for. There was no existing political organization capable of taking up the challenge of the South. The chiefs of the latter were utterly astounded by the roar of surprise, fury, dismay, of helpless, aimless, moblike wrath which swept the North like a tidal wave from the Atlantic westward.

Mr. Douglas was as much astonished as were his Southern colleagues. He finished his Senatorial work in Washington, and hurried to Illinois to try and persuade the people that his bill did not mean what they all said it did. At Chicago the angry multitude refused to listen to him, and he went on to Springfield.

The State Fair was held in that city in October, drawing together a vast throng from all parts of the State, thoroughly representing its best population; and before that assembly the Senator pleaded in his own defense.

There was one man in Springfield to whom the Kansas-Nebraska bill, the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, the re-opening of the slavery question, had come as a new lease of life. As by one voice the duty of answering Douglas was assigned to Mr. Lincoln, and he may be truly said to have made his first great political speech that day. All the smothered fire of his brooding days and nights and years burst forth in a power and with an eloquence which even those who knew him best had not so much as hoped for.

There was no report made of that speech. Not a sentence of it had been reduced to writing beforehand. He spoke all that was in his heart to speak, and when he sat down there had been a new party born in the State of Illinois, and he was its father, its head, its unquestioned and unquestionable representative and leader.

Mr. Douglas briefly and vainly attempted a reply, ending by



a promise of another speech in the evening; but his defeat had been altogether too complete. He made no second appearance before the assembly which had listened while Mr. Lincoln tore his fallacies to shreds and held his personal political record up to their scorn and ridicule. The evening was occupied instead by a number of the best orators in the State, both Whigs and Democrats, enforcing the great lesson of the day and carrying forward the work which Lincoln had so well begun.

The elements for the formation of a new party were abundant in every Northern State, and they were aggregating rapidly, but they were yet confused, unorganized, chaotic. There was great intensity of feeling among all the varied and disconnected constituencies, but no formulated expression had been agreed upon. So far as men were able to typify the ideas and purposes to which they were opposed, these were temporarily embodied in Stephen A. Douglas rather than in any Southern leader. It was a distinction of which he afterwards laboriously and painfully divested himself. But he wore it long enough to serve the purpose for which it was given him.

A part of this had been already well served. Publicly, before a vast jury of his fellow-citizens, as the champion of his cause he had met and been vanquished by the man who thenceforward was to express in his own voice and personality, and at last to officially represent and direct, the national will and soul, aroused by proslavery aggression. The service was not fully performed that day, for afterwards Mr. Douglas was to act as a pointing hand, concentrating the eyes of men upon Mr. Lincoln, so that they might know their leader and form column behind him as he went forward.

Much good work for freedom had already been done upon the floors of Congress, in House and Senate; much in the press and in the pulpit; more in talks by firesides and in neighborhood gatherings. The fire passed swiftly from man to man. Had it not been so there would have been no party to organize. It is, nevertheless, a matter of historical record that the exist-

ence of the Republican party, unnamed but living, dates from the first collision at Springfield of Stephen A. Douglas with the man who for forty-seven years of toilsome development had unwittingly prepared himself for that hour and for the long struggle which was to follow.

The other orators of the day, the crowd that sympathized, admired, applauded, saw little more than the fact that "Old Abe has made a splendid speech. We did not know it was in him."

Some of them also perceived the evident fact that whenever Mr. Douglas or any other champion of the cause he represented should require to be met again, there could be no doubt as to the popular choice of a man to meet him. Not that Mr. Lincoln was a great man or the equal of Mr. Douglas. He was too near a neighbor for that, and not known much outside of the State. Nothing great about him. They knew him. Had heard him tell stories. Still, he was a sort of growing man, and he could make a right down good speech. A man with a sadly defective education.

There was a reason why Mr. Lincoln did not attend the gathering of the people in the evening after his great Springfield speech. The extreme Abolitionists, blind to the meaning of that which was passing before their eyes, had announced a separate meeting of their own. They had planned, moreover, that the triumphant orator of the day should be there present and be forced to identify himself with their faction. He was plainly an Abolitionist in heart and why should he not become one in name?

It was a thoroughly sincere and honest piece of un wisdom. But even so ardent an antislavery man as Mr. Herndon saw the danger to his friend and to all the interests at stake, and he hastened to give warning. He himself says:

"I rushed to Lincoln and said, 'Lincoln, go home; take Bob and the buggy and leave the county; go quickly; right off; and never mind the order of your going.' He stayed away till all conventions and fairs were over."

It was the announced purpose of Mr. Douglas to speak between that time and the election at various large towns throughout the State, and Mr. Lincoln was requested to follow and reply to him, according to the prevailing Western custom. The request was united in by prominent men of the three factions, Whigs, Abolitionists, and Anti-Nebraska Democrats, which were already coalescing to form the new party and did not know it. The duty was promptly accepted by Mr. Lincoln, and the two leaders met at Peoria in a second encounter. The results of this destroyed all willingness on the part of Douglas for any further trial of strength. An agreement, afterwards somewhat departed from, was entered into, by the terms of which both combatants retired from the canvass. It was a political capitulation.

Mr. Lincoln's Peoria speech was printed and widely read. By it his followers were supplied with forcible verbal formulas for the expression of their thoughts and feelings, and all the local speakers of the fall campaign were given a magazine of fresh material to draw upon.

Mr. Douglas, prior to his arrangement for withdrawal, had made an appointment to speak at Lacon, and Mr. Lincoln went to meet him there, but refrained from speaking when he found his opponent disabled by illness. On his return home he learned that his friends, represented by Mr. William Jayne, had announced him in the *Journal* as a candidate for the State Legislature, and that Mrs. Lincoln, well knowing her husband's views and wishes, had called upon the editor, Mr. Francis, and procured the removal of the announcement from the paper. Of course Mr. Jayne went to see Mr. Lincoln on his arrival, and he thus relates the story of it :

"I went to see him in order to get his consent to run. This was at his house. He was then the saddest man I ever saw; the gloomiest. He walked up and down the floor, almost crying, and to all my persuasions to let his name stand in the paper he said, 'No, I can't. You don't know all. I say you

don't begin to know one half, and that's enough.' I did, however, go and have his name reinstated, and there it stood. He and Logan were elected by about six hundred majority."

There is a wonderful simplicity about this whole transaction of wife and husband and devoted friends. Little enough the others knew,—unless it may have been to some extent known to his wife,—the awful struggle of which the external symptoms so puzzled them.

They seem to have sagely decided, although with some wonder that Lincoln should feel so badly about it, that he had serious doubts of the advisability of going to the Legislature just then. His very soul was wrung to agony; they could see that; but he never took the small trouble to have his candidacy denied. He was elected; and then, as soon as the Legislature came together, he resigned.

There was an obvious reason for the latter step. Mr. Lincoln was well known to be a candidate for United States Senator, in place of James Shields, whose term was expiring. The latter had voted for the Kansas-Nebraska Bill with Mr. Douglas, and the opponents of the hated law were in the majority if their several factions could be induced to act in concert. Some other man than Shields would surely be chosen by the Legislature, and Mr. Lincoln's sense of propriety forbade him to sit as a member of the body which was to act upon his claims as a candidate.

He had a strong desire to go to the Senate, there to continue the war he had so well begun. He was no prophet, and had none to tell him that, for a time at least, private life was a better place for him than the dignified assembly which has been shrewdly described as "the graveyard of Presidential candidates." It was necessary that he should remain a man of the people, among the people; studying the course of events better than that could be done in the heated atmosphere of the Capitol. It was equally needful that he should keep himself untrammelled by the fetters of official responsibility, and that

he should avoid the sure peril of injudicious utterances in the fierce debates that were soon to come, and to which the country was to listen as it had never listened before.

More than all was it needful that the forces preparing and growing within him should have two years of accumulation, rather than exhaustion.

On the 8th of February, 1855, the Legislature took in hand the election of a United States Senator. It was found that Gen. Shields, and after him ex-Governor Mattison, to whom the Democrats transferred their strength, had forty-one votes; while the anti-Democratic majority were divided, giving to Mr. Lincoln forty-five, Mr. Trumbull five, and Mr. Koerner two. Forty-seven were required to elect, and repeated ballotings brought no change in favor of either of the leading candidates. Then came signs of danger that some of Mr. Trumbull's supporters, who were opposed to the Kansas-Nebraska measure, but were Democrats all, and old political opponents of Mr. Lincoln, might relapse into their former party allegiance. Mr. Lincoln's advice was asked and given. He said without a moment's hesitation: "You ought to drop me and go for Trumbull. That is the only way you can defeat Mattison."

His friend, Judge Logan, urged that he should continue to be a candidate, but was firmly answered:

"If I do, you will lose both Trumbull and myself, and I think the cause, in this case, is to be preferred to men."

The Whigs obeyed, in bitterness of spirit, and Lyman Trumbull was chosen Senator instead of Abraham Lincoln. The act of the latter did more than send an able and patriotic man to the Senate. It retained the anti-Nebraska Democratic element in the new party, in that and in other States. It kept Lincoln at home in Illinois, but in charge of all further consolidation of jarring elements, and with the threads of all control more firmly in his hands than ever. His neighbors had trusted his integrity and recognized his capacity. They were now compelled to acknowledge and to honor his rare unselfishness.

The sacrifice had cost him something, but the unexpected reward was promptly and loyally paid him.

It was an additional recompense, shortly afterwards, to find how bravely and how well Senator Trumbull was performing the high duty so magnanimously surrendered to him. His very presence in the Senate-chamber was a visible warning to the slavery propagandists that their long control of the Democratic party of the North had been broken forever.



## CHAPTER XXI.

## THE NEW PARTY.

Bleeding Kansas—A Watchful Friend—Trapping a Trapper—The Bloomington Convention—General Apathy—The Voice of Faith.

OF the two Territories created by the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, the former was manifestly the more nearly ready for admission into the Union as a State. Upon the soil of Kansas, therefore, the contending political forces had already begun to pour themselves, in a tide of extraordinary immigration from the older States. The lawless and often bloody scenes enacting there were doing much to convince the nation that the days of mere argument, and even of mere balloting, were passing away. A most peaceful generation, born and nurtured in the hatred of all violence, was undergoing a process of habituation to the idea of brute force as a tribunal of final appeal.

The sympathies of the anti-slavery men of Illinois were strongly appealed to on behalf of their downtrodden brethren of Kansas. In 1856, not long after the Senatorial election, an association was formed of the more zealous Abolitionists, with the view of emigrating, armed and equipped, to what was practically the seat of civil war. Among these was Mr. Herndon, and his purpose could not long be concealed from his wiser, cooler, more far-seeing law-partner. By some means Mr. Lincoln got the hot-heads together, and addressed them in the name of peace, law, order, and sound common-sense. He not only convinced them that their purpose was wrong, but that it was foolish, and persuaded them to stay at home. He joined them, however, in sending pecuniary and other contri-



butions to the assistance of the actual Kansas settlers who were suffering in consequence of the political disorders.

He himself had been too wise, in his most earnest utterances, to avow himself an extreme Abolitionist. In his mind, the country had other interests than those of the black man. The future of the white race was also entitled to some consideration. The best good of all forbade indifference to the welfare of any part.

The several factions into which the opposition to the controlling party was still divided in Illinois were in a state of seeming blindness to their approaching consolidation; but Mr. Lincoln was not. Each coterie put forth eager but vain efforts to secure the adhesion to their number of the man who contained in himself more power than any or all of them. They compelled him to exercise great care. So reticent was he, so cautious not to make any answer which should seem to identify his name with any clique or segment, that even Mr. Herndon felt himself called upon to labor with his friend in the interest of the cause of freedom. He lent him antislavery books and papers; read him extracts from speeches and lectures; strove in every way to arouse in him a more aggressive hatred of slavery and a disposition to fight against it. Mr. Lincoln might well have said to him, as he had said to Mr. Jayne: "You don't begin to know the half of it, and that's enough."

He said very little, however, and his friend persisted in considering him unsettled in his political mind.

The radicals of every name were shortly summoned to a State convention to be held at Bloomington, and a "call" was circulated in Springfield for a county convention for the selection of delegates. There still remained a curious doubt as to the course Mr. Lincoln would pursue. He was absent when the "call" was passed around for signatures, but Mr. Herndon, zealously determined to make him commit himself, signed his name to it for him. Nothing could add to Mr. Herndon's own account of the transaction and its consequences. He says:

"I determined to make him take a stand, if he would not do it willingly, as he might have done, as he was naturally inclined Abolitionward. Lincoln was absent when the call was signed and circulated here. I signed Mr. Lincoln's name without authority; had it published in the *Journal*. John T. Stuart was keeping his eye on Lincoln, with the view of keeping him on his side—the totally dead conservative side. Mr. Stuart saw the published call and grew mad; rushed into my office. Seemed mad and horrified, and said to me, 'Sir, did Mr. Lincoln sign that Abolition call which is published this morning?' I answered, 'Mr. Lincoln did not sign that call.' 'Did Mr. Lincoln authorize you to sign it?' said Mr. Stuart. 'No, he never authorized me to sign it.' 'Then do you know that you have ruined Mr. Lincoln?' 'I did not know that I had ruined Mr. Lincoln; did not intend to do so; thought he was a made man by it; that the time had come when conservatism was a crime and a blunder.' 'You, then, take the responsibility of your acts, do you?' 'I do, most emphatically.' However, I sat down and wrote to Mr. Lincoln, who was then in Pekin or Tremont, possibly at court. He received my letter and instantly replied, either by letter or telegraph,—most likely by letter,—that he adopted *in toto* what I had done, and promised to meet the radicals—Lovejoy and such-like men—among us."

All this is as much as to say that they thought it was needful to entrap Mr. Lincoln, and this is the way in which the large game was caught and caged.

There was, however, something of a surprise in store for the successful trappers. When the State convention came together at Bloomington, it was found to comprise strong conservative as well as ultra-progressive elements. It was precisely the conclave for which Mr. Lincoln had long been waiting, and the opportunity had come for him to deliver another decisive speech. He was undeniably the man of the occasion, and others were waiting to hear from him.

It was pretty well understood that his utterance would be regarded as the voice of the convention, and would be, to all intents and purposes, the "platform" upon which it would be compelled to stand. So to speak, he had taken possession of the trap wherein his wise friends had caged him and was calmly proceeding to capture the trappers.

The speech he made has been declared the ablest of his strictly political addresses. In many respects it is certainly the most interesting of all. He was able, for the first time, to free his arguments from many of the meshes formerly cast around them by existing laws, by "compromises," and by expressed or implied social contracts. Mr. Douglas and his friends in Congress had done this much for him and for freedom.

The new party, thus beginning to assume organic existence, first assumed the name of "Republican" at this particular Convention at Bloomington, Illinois, and it has been common to say that it was "born" then and there. This is simply a confusion of ideas, for the young political organism had already left its cradle and was advanced far along the line of preparation for the severe work of early manhood. There is a difference between mere ceremonies of christening and other vitalizing processes of creation.

Apart from the more glowing paragraphs of Mr. Lincoln's speech, the proceedings at Bloomington were apparently conservative, and the extremists were but little pleased with them.

The "platform" actually adopted did not go far enough, and yet it went to the limit of what Mr. Lincoln believed the people were ready to accept. It went so much further than that in fact, and the whole undertaking had in it so much of audacity, of presumptuous rebellion against the existing order of things, of an advance into unknown and perilous ground, that the report of it was received with general apathy and was followed by a mysteriously deep and timid reaction. So strong in the minds of men was the doubt as to what course they

should pursue, that the entire voting population may be said to have held its political breath. About five days after the adjournment of the convention, a public meeting was called in Springfield to "ratify" the action taken. The county court-house, where the meeting was to be held, was well lighted; the usual posters on all the fences had announced the meeting and the name of the distinguished orator who was to address it; a band of music paraded the streets to drum up enthusiasm, and the bells were rung. The net result of all these praiseworthy efforts is reported by Mr. Herndon, who, with Mr. Lincoln and a man named John Pain, were all the multitude the occasion brought together:

"When Mr. Lincoln came into the court-house, he came with a sadness and a sense of the ludicrous on his face. He walked to the stand, mounted it with a kind of mocking,—mirth and sadness all combined,—and said: 'Gentlemen, this meeting is larger than I knew it would be. I knew that Herndon and myself would come, but I did not know that any one else would be here; and yet another has come,—you, John Pain. These are sad times and seem out of joint. All seems dead, dead, dead; but the age is not yet dead: it liveth as sure as our Maker liveth. Under all this seeming want of life and motion the world does move, nevertheless. Be hopeful. And now let us adjourn, and appeal to the people.'"

He made many longer speeches in the course of his life, but not one that was braver or better. He well understood the true nature of the temporary paralysis of the new political movement, and had measured the forces whose irrepressible activities forbade its long continuance. Nevertheless, it required a good deal of faith to stand up in an empty hall and so address Mr. Herndon and John Pain.

## CHAPTER XXII.

## THE COMING MAN.

The Frémont Campaign—Lincoln for Vice-President—The Southern Threat—Days of Preparation—Buchanan's Term—One Story Higher—A Murder Case.

THE varied elements of the new party, in all those parts of the country wherein it could be permitted to exist, were now rapidly coalescing, but did not yet call themselves Republicans. A "national convention" was held at Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, in February, 1856, but adjourned without making nominations. A second convention met at Philadelphia, on the 17th of June, and nominated John C. Frémont for President and William L. Dayton for Vice-President. The supporters of these candidates very generally concealed their hesitation as to their future political course by styling themselves vaguely "The People's Party."

At the Philadelphia convention, when the Illinois delegation, in its turn, was called upon to present a nomination for the office of Vice-President of the United States, its chairman announced the name of Abraham Lincoln. When the ballots were counted, he was found to be the second on the list of candidates, having received 110 votes. Mr. Dayton had 289 votes, and 180 ballots were distributed among many other names.

Mr. Lincoln had not yet had time to think much of his own political prospects in connection with the new party. Position and power had come to him more rapidly than he was aware. So little did he know how strong a hold he was taking upon the minds of men that the honor thus given him came as a

complete surprise. He was attending court in Urbana, Champaign County, when the telegraph brought the news that Dayton had been nominated, but that "Mr. Lincoln received 110 votes."

"That must be our Lincoln," half doubtfully remarked some of his friends in his hearing; but he said, "No, it could not be: it must have been the *great* Lincoln from Massachusetts." There was, indeed, a prominent citizen of that State who bore the same name.

All that was left of the old Whig party nominated "Fillmore and Donelson." The Democrats nominated "Buchanan and Breckinridge," with a positive assurance of success. The campaign began at once, and Mr. Lincoln went into it with all his energy, as a candidate for Presidential Elector of the State of Illinois, on the Frémont and Dayton ticket. In so doing, he was, of necessity, brought before the entire country as the immediate antagonist and, as it proved, intellectual superior of the Democratic champion, Stephen A. Douglas, a man of national reputation. Mr. Lincoln's closest friends and warmest admirers in Illinois had but inadequate ideas of the extent to which, in part or in whole, the speeches of the man whom they regarded as their excellent and, in some things, very capable neighbor were read by the people of other States. They little guessed how widely and deeply the foundations of his repute and power were building through all the busy days of that great though seemingly unsuccessful campaign.

Any discussing of pending questions, as then formulated, may be set aside as belonging to the political history of the times rather than to the biography of Abraham Lincoln. Not so, however, with the fact that the Democratic press and orators, North and South, from beginning to end of the campaign of 1856, held up before the people the red specters of disunion and civil war, to deter all timid men from opposing the onward march of slavery. It was not a mere threat, and Mr. Lincoln at no time treated it as such, but discussed it seriously.



He repeatedly argued the wicked unreason of regarding the election of the anti-slavery candidates as an excuse for the commission of the proposed crime.

He clearly perceived the reality of the coming peril, even while he publicly declared its devilish folly. His fits of despondency came upon him more frequently than ever, and more darkly. There was no suddenness whatever in this ripening of his understanding and the appreciation of the forces in collision. It had come with the growth of his personal convictions of duty and with his painfully labored study of the measures wisely to be taken or avoided, the words well to be uttered or left unspoken, and of the slow processes through which the general popular mind was unwittingly preparing to meet the wrath to come.

It has been only too common a stupidity for men to look upon Mr. Lincoln as a species of political miracle; a prodigy of sudden sagacity and power; blindly selected from among an unknown multitude by the chance-medley results of a political lottery at a convention; swiftly expanding to colossal knowledge and wisdom under the furnace-heat of circumstances. Sound common-sense and healthy human reason have no faith in such irrational marvels.

Every day of his life, prior to the Frémont campaign, had been a preparation for it. Every hour of that intense excitement was surcharged with the same close, penetrating, unforgetting study that he had given to the charcoal scores on his Indiana shingle; to the law-books he devoured during his hot walks from Springfield to New Salem; or to the Euclid or Shakespeare he carried with him in his borrowed buggy around the Sangamon three-months' circuit.

Every corner of his soul was a busy workshop, with no open windows through which other men could look in and see what was going on. While others were discontentedly waiting and wondering what would be the end of it all, he was aiding them to wait with better patience. At the same time he was saga-

ciously aiding them in getting ready for such action as might be required when the hour should come to wait no longer. When that hour came, it was only because of their own surprise at what he said and did that they dimly imagined he must also be astonishing himself.

The results of the November voting were precisely what all but a few over-sanguine and inexperienced politicians had expected. Mr. Buchanan was elected President of the United States, and the Democratic party seemed to be settled more firmly than ever in its long-held place of power. True, there was a strong and persistent minority of Republicans in each House of Congress. Their numbers were growing, and they were soon to be in control of the Lower House. They had already carried one of their number to the Speaker's chair, but with an ill-disciplined and somewhat uncertain support for him after he was put there. The assumption of the name "Republicans" by the new party was progressive, as the several elements and factions were from day to day absorbed by it. The newspaper reporters and editors aided the process by a continual application of the term.

The hot debates of the sessions now to follow would weld that fragmentary mass upon the floor of the House into the compactness of hammered iron. Already the watchful eyes of the Southern leaders were noting the menacing fact that the new party lost no inch of vantage-ground once fairly won.

Mr. Lincoln's law-practice was now larger than ever before, and was fairly lucrative, although his fees were never such as prominent Eastern counsel were in the habit of receiving. His first really heavy fee, of five thousand dollars for services rendered the Illinois Central Railroad Company, was actually disputed by that corporation as extortionate, although they would have paid it instantly to any leader of the New York bar. Mr. Lincoln brought suit for his claim, and a "jury of lawyers" affirmed its justice before it was paid him. He was living in a good but very unobtrusive style. His house had grown to a

sufficient size under the hands of his wife rather than his own. During one of his long professional absences, she procured the building of a larger and handsomer second story, with a new roof and a coat of fresh paint over all. On her husband's return, he is said to have paused for a moment in front of the unexpected transformation, and then to have jocosely hailed a passer-by :

"Stranger, can you tell me where Lincoln lives? He used to live here."

It was entirely impossible for even a busy lawyer to keep out of politics altogether during the year and a half immediately following the inauguration of President Buchanan. The course of events in Kansas and in Congress was such as daily to fan the popular excitement. All men were beginning to discern for themselves the exact nature and direction of their moral and intellectual leanings. The greater number were rising toward the high rank of persons having convictions, purposes, and some knowledge of public affairs. Below these was the swarming mob of those who can feel but who cannot think. These latter, like their betters, were waiting for a leader and a plainly uttered "order of the day." Both were to come in due time, for the one was formulating the other and was patiently awaiting the right time for its utterance.

During the summer of the year 1857 a man named Metzgar was murdered at a camp-meeting in Mason County, Illinois, and two men, named James H. Norris and William D. Armstrong, were accused of the crime. The former was tried in Mason County, convicted of manslaughter, and sentenced to eight years of prison-life. The popular feeling against Armstrong was so bitter that it was doubted if a fair trial could be given him near the scene of the murder. A "change of venue" was therefore taken to Beardstown, in Cass County, where he was tried for murder, in the spring of 1858.

Armstrong was a mere "rough" and wretchedly poor; but he had not committed the murder he was accused of. He

was a son of that Jack Armstrong of Clary's Grove, near New Salem, whose affection Lincoln had gained by shaking him at arm's length. When a baby he had been rocked in his cradle by his father's tall friend, while his mother, Hannah Armstrong, attended to other household duties. At one time Lincoln had been almost a member of the family.

Hannah was old now, and she had no money to pay lawyers, but she had faith in her friend, and wrote him an account of her trouble. Mr. Lincoln at once replied that he would undertake the defense, but the heartbroken old woman managed to travel to Springfield that she might tell him all she knew about the matter, and win his honest help as well as his sympathy.

It seemed a hopeless case, for the evidence against Armstrong was clear and positive and not at all circumstantial. It appeared to be inevitable that he would be convicted not of manslaughter but of murder, and that he would surely be hanged for his crime, and as the principal offender.

Mr. Lincoln appeared in court on the day of trial, but gave over the verbal management of the witnesses to his colleague in the case, Mr. Walker, who had already made a study of it. He himself did little more than to suggest questions and keenly watch for the way of escape which no other man in the court-room believed could be discovered.

The proof of murder was complete. Good witnesses testified to having seen Armstrong commit the deed, by the light of a nearly full moon shining high in a cloudless heaven. Until Mr. Lincoln arose to speak, the prisoner at the bar stood practically convicted, and the jury could have given against him a verdict of "guilty" without leaving their seats.

The evidence, however, was only too perfect. It was too nicely fitted and adjusted, and when taken up in the hands of a master it came to pieces and could be put together again in another shape so as to show that the murder was not committed then and there by that man, but elsewhere, afterwards, and

by other hands. The speaker went on step by step until he was ready to call upon the clerk of the court for an almanac which he had previously placed in his hands for the purpose. Then he asked the jury to note the fact that at the alleged hour of the murder, instead of the splendor of moonlight sworn to by the prosecuting witnesses, there was no moon at all and darkness reigned.

Court, jury, lawyers, burst into a roar of astonished laughter; but the moment it died away Mr. Lincoln launched out into a speech which has been described by all who heard it as wonderfully eloquent. All said that it saved the life of Armstrong, without reference to the testimony so skillfully pulled to pieces, by its touching description of his own early struggles and the kindness then shown him by the now widowed mother of the prisoner at the bar. He believed the young man innocent, and he made the jury believe so with him. There were tears in his voice and in his eyes, however, while he talked of those old days of hardship and toil and privation, and of the simple, rough, kindly-hearted prairie people with whom he had shared them. It was a noble appeal, full of pathos, argument, genius, eloquence, persuasive power. More than all this is such an utterance of value in the study of his life and character, by the revelation it affords of his own perpetual consciousness of the level from which he had climbed and of the inner forces by whose operation he had arisen. In this is to be found one secret of his influence over men who remained at or near that first low level, for it is more than likely that the jury before him was largely composed of such men. More than one of his most important public utterances, as President of the United States, will be found on analysis to have been framed and worded that it might reach the understandings and the hearts of that vast popular jury which is but a multiplication of country juries and the "boys" of Clary's Grove. In order that he might have and retain this power, he faithfully carried with him to the very end, half mournfully, half lov-

ingly, a minute memory and understanding of all the events of his early life, and of all the persons, types of character, experiences, which thereby had been made his instructors.

When the hour came for the uses of this peculiar gift, all the Hannah Armstrongs in the country felt free to go to him about their boys, and all the Bill Armstrongs north of the Ohio River came marching at his call in serried masses of "three hundred thousand more."

Polished incapacity shuts its blind eyes unnecessarily to this very day, and sneers at the unseen lesson it might learn from the great lawyer and politician weeping genuine tears before a Cass County jury while he told them about the baby and the cradle in Jack Armstrong's log-cabin.

Poor old Hannah came back to the congratulations of the crowded court-room, from which she had fled, after the speech, "down to Thompson's pasture," remaining there until informed of the acquittal of her son. The judge shook hands with her; so did the jury; so did Abraham Lincoln, with the hot tears pouring down his face. He said a few kind words to her then, and afterwards, when she asked him how much he was going to charge her and told him she was poor, he said: "Why, Hannah, I sha'n't charge you a cent. Never. Anything I can do for you I will do for you willingly and freely without charges."



## CHAPTER XXIII.

## POLITICAL PROPHECY.

A Rejected Leader—A Great Convention—An Historical Speech—Nominated for United States Senator—The Joint Debates with Douglas—The Splitting of the Democratic Party—Beginnings of a Presidential Nomination—Spring 1858 to Spring 1859.

THE term for which Stephen A. Douglas had been elected to the Senate of the United States was now drawing to a close. He was, as a matter of course, a candidate for re-election; but there had been a great change in his political relations since the beginning of the Buchanan Administration. He had severed his previous connection with the Southern chiefs of the Democracy and their more subservient tools at the North. The tremendous lessons of the Frémont campaign had not been lost upon him. He saw that a large and much the more intelligent section of the Northern Democracy would go no further in submission to the arrogant demands of the slave power. He boldly and ably put himself at their head and forced them to acknowledge him as their representative. When that was accomplished, he would willingly have led them bodily into the Republican camp could he have been assured as a reward a re-election to the Senate.

Many sincere Republicans earnestly advocated the proposed coalition, but the greater number distrusted Mr. Douglas. They were willing to receive him as a recruit but not as a commanding officer. Headed by Senator Trumbull, who had now become fully identified with the new party, the Illinois Republicans determined to stand or fall by their existing organization. Having so determined, there could be but one

voice as to who should be their standard-bearer in the battle before them. When, however, in April, 1858, the Democratic State Convention met, and, after making the usual nominations for State officers, added thereto an indorsement of Mr. Douglas, it was again strongly urged by some Republicans that the great Democratic Senator was not only himself advancing in the right direction but was skillfully taking his whole party with him. It was declared to be the part of wisdom for the Republicans to name no candidate against him. They should rather accept and even triumphantly claim him as their own.

The proposition was not at all unreasonable. At that day, Mr. Douglas was quite enough of an anti-slavery man to satisfy the great majority of those who called themselves Republicans and deemed it a kind of "radicalism" to stand upon the platform of principles they had vaguely adopted for the uses of the Frémont campaign. They were somewhat in ignorance of their own immediate future. The old battle-field, with which they had grown fairly familiar, was not at all the one to which they were now to be led, neither was it in the heart or brain of Mr. Douglas to marshal them for the ground upon which they were shortly to be arrayed. If they had accepted him, as proposed, he would have led them to a sure victory—over nothing whatever. Rejecting him, they were to be led to a sure defeat, followed by a surer victory, under the orders of a captain able to see beyond the narrow consequences of the present emergency.

The Republican State Convention was called to meet at Springfield on the 16th of June. When gathered, the delegates, with their alternates, actually present numbered nearly a thousand men. They represented nearly all the old parties and fractions of parties, and were of all shades of political opinion and social standing. Owing to the peculiar composition of the population of the State of Illinois, the entire country was personally represented in that assembly. There were men there from every Northern State and from many States of the

South. An unusually large proportion were young men never before active in politics. It was to such a conclave as this that Mr. Lincoln deliberately prepared to present the issue before the country. He decided that it must be so presented that no man among them could fail to understand it.

That he would be the orator of the occasion was a matter of course, and the preparation of the speech he was to make was a task the performance of which is worthy of careful noting. It was not the work of a mere politician; it was the thoughtful expression of a human life. It came from his mind in scraps and small pieces, a sentence at a time, jotted down on fragments and slips of paper. Then at last these were gathered and put into form for delivery and for printing. All those detached segments had been growing in the speaker's thought through gloomy, toilsome years.

On the 16th of June the Convention unanimously adopted the following resolution:

"That Abraham Lincoln is our first and only choice for United States Senator, to fill the vacancy about to be created by the expiration of Mr. Douglas's term of office."

They were now pledged to their chosen chief beyond recall, and must abide by his leadership.

Mr. Lincoln had taken neither advice nor counsel in the preparation of his speech, but he saw the necessity of also preparing some of his nearer friends for what it was to be. He read it first to Mr. Herndon, the most extreme Abolitionist of his intimates, and that excellent gentleman timidly asked him:

"It is true; but is it entirely politic to speak it or read it as it is written?"

The question referred particularly to the key-note of the speech, and Mr. Lincoln replied:

"That makes no difference. That expression is a truth of all human experience, 'a house divided against itself cannot stand,' and 'he that runs may read.' The proposition is indisputably true and has been true for more than six thousand

years; and—I *will* deliver it as it is written. I want to use some universally known figure, expressed in simple language as universally known, that may strike home to the minds of men in order to rouse them to the peril of the times. I would rather be defeated with this expression in the speech, and it held up and discussed before the people, than to be victorious without it."

Having sounded the depths of Abolition courage through his friend Herndon, Mr. Lincoln proceeded to consult others, and finally gathered a dozen leading men in the Library Room of the State House, not to ask their guidance, but to assure them of his purpose by reading the speech to them, and, if possible, to form a small nucleus of favorable public opinion in advance. He read and they listened, and every man present except Mr. Herndon, who had already caught fire and was beginning to burn pretty well, condemned the bold utterance as an utter destruction of the party at the hands of its captain. It was in advance of the time. It was unwise. It was impolitic if not, indeed, untrue.

Mr. Lincoln heard them all thoughtfully. He walked up and down the room; then stood still and said to them:

"Friends, I have thought about this matter a great deal; have surveyed the question well from all corners; and am thoroughly convinced the time has come when it should be uttered: and if it must be that I go down because of this speech, then let me go down linked to truth,—die in the advocacy of what is right and just. This nation cannot live on injustice. 'A house divided against itself *cannot* stand,' I say again and again."

The results of his long years of study, internal strife, brooding thought, agonized wrestlings with doubt on the one side and ambition on the other, was that he planted his faith deep in a word of Jesus the Christ, and was ready to live or die by it. He saw that this was the way, the truth, and the life for him and for the nation, and all expostulation failed to move him.

The speech was delivered without modification, on the 17th of June, to the Convention and a dense throng of other citizens from all parts of the State. With the entire, colossal argument we have little to do here, but the "key-note" which startled the nation is as follows:

"Gentlemen of the Convention: If we could first know where we are and whither we are tending, we could then better judge what to do and how to do it. We are now far on into the fifth year since a policy was initiated with the avowed object and confident promise of putting an end to slavery agitation. Under the operation of that policy, that agitation has not only not ceased but has continually augmented. In my opinion it will not cease until a crisis shall have been reached and passed. 'A house divided against itself cannot stand.' I believe this government cannot endure permanently, half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved; I do not expect the house to fall; but I do expect that it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing or all the other. Either the opponents of slavery will arrest the further spread of it and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in course of ultimate extinction, or its advocates will push it forward till it shall become alike lawful in all the States, old as well as new, North as well as South."

No words so daring, no such unequivocal statement of the great problem, had yet been uttered by any man of political prominence and power.

Mr. Seward had been visited with vast abuse for declaring "the irrepressible conflict" between freedom and slavery, but his boldest utterance had been philosophical feebleness compared to this.

His work, of inestimable value, had been in the nature of a preparation of the public mind for the forced reception of a great and gloomy fact to which it had hitherto shut its ears and blinded its eyes. Such words as Lincoln uttered can never be recalled, for, being truth, they are spirit and they are life,

and they cannot die, but live forever. In other forms and adaptations, they apply and will be applied to any and every question of human right and wrong upon which, in all the world, a people or nation shall henceforth be divided. They will help all men to see and know that, in any such division, the fighting cannot cease but must go on to an end, whether men choose for themselves that they will fight for hell or for heaven.

Nevertheless, as Lincoln himself said, in the sublimely courageous words with which the great speech ended :

“The result is not doubtful. We shall not fail,—if we stand firm we shall not fail. Wise counsels may accelerate or mistakes delay it, but, sooner or later, the victory is sure to come.”

From the Kentucky hut and the Indiana “pole-shelter;” from ignorance, vice, filth, darkness, poverty; through toil and sorrow and suffering; through storms of heart and soul which drove him mad, the germ of a great life and noble manhood had expanded slowly, until this was the voice it could send forth to a tumultuous time, to a doubting, hesitating party, and to a bewildered, faint-hearted people.

The immediate result of the speech was precisely what his friends had feared and prophesied. All the more conservative elements were horrified, and the very radicals murmured at an impolitic frankness which openly invited defeat at the polls. There is no question that it prevented Mr. Lincoln’s election to the Senate and sent Mr. Douglas there in his stead, at the end of the most remarkable personal canvass on record. They met in debates at prominent points all over the State. Everywhere Mr. Lincoln proved his superiority both in intellectual power and in soundness of moral position, but the people were not yet quite ready to follow him. He had gone on too far in advance of them, and they required time in which they might open their new-born political eyes and learn to look at realities and grow and think a little.

Mr. Lamon relates that, a day or two after the delivery of



the speech, a Dr. Long, unconsciously representing a great multitude, came into Lincoln's law-office to free his mind. He said :

" Well, Lincoln, that foolish speech of yours will kill you—will defeat you in this contest, and probably for all offices for all time to come. I am sorry, sorry,—very sorry. I wish it was wiped out of existence. Don't you wish it, now ?"

Mr. Lincoln dropped the pen he had been busy with, and turned his sad, earnest, half-contemptuous smile upon the mourner :

" Well, Doctor, if I had to draw a pen across and erase my whole life from existence, and I had one poor gift or choice left as to what I should save from the wreck, I should choose that speech and leave it to the world unerascd."

With others he afterwards argued earnestly the wisdom and policy as well as the truth of that speech, both as to time and place, and most men of the party were shortly able to agree with him.

An important result of the joint debates between Lincoln and Douglas was that the latter was forced into such explanations and to take such ground before his own constituents that he thereby lost all hope of regaining his broken hold upon the South. He was driven to the alternative of abandoning his ambitious design upon the Presidency or of splitting his own party in sunder. His subsequent choice of the latter course made possible the Republican triumph of 1860, and his temporary success in 1858 encouraged him to that determination.

The popular vote in November, 1858, showed a numerical majority of over four thousand for the Republican ticket, but that did not carry with it a majority of members of the Legislature. The friends of Douglas controlled both Houses. If, in the heat of the struggle, Mr. Lincoln permitted himself to hope for a different result, he took his defeat with equanimity. He could not have more than dimly dreamed of the immediate

reward in store for him, but he had done his duty. He had been placed before the whole country in a strong light. He had fairly won a national reputation. He had proved himself such a leader as anxious men were waiting for. Nevertheless, those who saw him daily and believed that they knew him best had but a faint and fragmentary idea of the impression he had made, and was still making, upon others than themselves. They talked about him, more or less, during the winter of 1858-9, and they severely criticised two or three attempts he made at "lecturing" on unimportant topics. Like other men, the country over, they were beginning to discuss the coming Presidential campaign and its possible candidates. It does not appear, however, that a man among them all took occasion to mention among these latter the defeated antagonist of Douglas in the recent State election.

At the county-seat of Champaign County, in the Eighth Judicial District, there was printed at that time a weekly newspaper, of good standing and circulation, called the *Central Illinois Gazette*. It was owned and nominally managed by an eccentric and illiterate country doctor, who never wrote for it. Its sole editor and real manager was a young man from New York who had barely a speaking acquaintance with Mr. Lincoln, though, like most of his neighbors, profoundly respecting and even enthusiastically admiring him.

In April, 1859, Mr. Lincoln was at the Doane House, in Champaign, the "railway half" of the county-seat, in attendance on business before the court. He had been to the post-office quite early one morning, returning, with a hat half full of letters, to a chair in the hotel office. He came in, absorbed, gloomy, neither speaking to or even noticing any one as he entered. He rested his feet on the big stove in the middle of the room and began to open and read his letters.

There had been a sharp dispute in the *Gazette* office the previous day, between the doctor and the editor, as to the precise political course to be pursued by that journal. As the

young man now came out from his breakfast in the hotel dining-room with his mind yet full of the subject of the quarrel, he saw the well-known face and form of Mr. Lincoln, and suddenly resolved to address him and ask his advice. But something in the dark, strong face arrested him, and he waited. It was worth any man's while to study such a face as that. Mr. Lincoln tore open a letter of more than ordinary length and began to read. It was closely written in a crabbed, black handwriting, but it must have contained matter for thought. He read it half through, dropped it in his hat and sat there as if looking at something a thousand miles away. His heavy features, deeply furrowed with wrinkles and sallow with fatigue of heart and brain, seemed flabby and lifeless for a few moments. Then, and swiftly, as if the keeper of the light-house had kindled the great fire within, the eyes and the whole face began to light up and glow with all the radiance of the hidden life that had so long been living there. The young watcher had never before seen anything like that upon any face of living being, and he reverently forbore to speak. He was thrilled and spell-bound by something of the force of a personality which had so often swayed multitudes to the will of the orator.

"The greatest man I ever saw or heard of!" he exclaimed to himself, as he quietly slipped out of the hotel. In a few moments he was in his own office and the doctor was there before him.

"Doctor," he shouted, "I've made up my mind for whom we are going for President."

"You don't say! Who is it?"

"Abraham Lincoln of Illinois!"

"What? Old Abe? Nonsense! We might go for him for Vice-President. He'd never do for any more'n that. Seward and Lincoln wouldn't be a bad ticket. But Old Abe! Who put that into your head?"

"He did. It's no use, doctor. He's the man. You've

got to tend office to-day. I'm off for Springfield, the next train, to get material for a campaign-life editorial."

The doctor yielded, as usual. The young editor went to Springfield and returned with his material. The article was written, and early in May it was printed. Hundreds of copies were industriously sent out, all over the State, to be quoted, commented upon, approved, and ridiculed, and the work of nominating a President, so far as Illinois was concerned, had been well begun before the nominee had been spoken to upon the subject. At the same time, a letter from the same hand, and to the same general effect, was printed in a journal published in the city of New York, but of course without attracting especial attention there.

The fact here related is a full refutation of the baseless assertion that Mr. Lincoln had anything whatever to do with the inception of what was strictly a popular movement. But the discussion and comments of people and press of course attracted the attention of those most interested, and from that time forth, naturally, both Mr. Lincoln and his friends watched closely and discussed freely all indications of the drift of public opinion with reference to the coming choice. Echoes came speedily, from every direction, repeating the enthusiastic outburst of the Champaign County editor. It looked as if some kind of a tide might be rising; but it was too early yet for reasonable calculation. There were many other distinguished names continually upon the lips of men. Hardly a State failed of putting forward one or more of its respected names in connection with the honorable competition. Plainly, a vast amount of careful work was before the party, in the nature of judicious sorting and sifting. Ordinarily, early "mention" is sure death to nomination; but it was well for Mr. Lincoln that his candidacy began at so early a day, for even his enemies and the crisis itself worked steadily in his behalf.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

## THE RISING TIDE.

National Fame—The Cooper Institute Speech—Sectionalism—Illinois State Convention at Decatur—The Rail-splitter—The Republican National Convention at Chicago—The Presidential Nomination—1859.

ALL over the country, and in every part of every section, popular preparations for the Presidential campaign of 1860 began earlier than usual. Men of all parties perceived, more or less clearly, that an unprecedented crisis was at hand in public affairs.

Mr. Lincoln began to receive letters from various persons who inquired as to his views of different questions. These were not all sent him with a friendly purpose, but his replies were at once frank and judicious. During the autumn of the year 1859 he made a number of political speeches in Ohio, and early in the winter he did the same in Kansas. Everywhere he gave renewed evidences of the ripening of his powers as a statesman and orator. His fame was growing so fast that even his best friends were compelled to recognize it. At last, a self-appointed committee of them arranged a conference with him, in a room of the State House at Springfield, to urge upon him the propriety of formally permitting the use of his name as a Presidential candidate. He heard them. He took one night to consider the matter, and the next day gave his consent. His demeanor throughout the conference was quiet, modest, thoughtful, and he expressed strong doubt of success in obtaining the nomination.

Meantime an unintended movement in his favor was made by men who had no thought of him as a rival of their own pre-

ferred candidates. In October he had received an invitation to deliver a lecture at the Cooper Institute, in New York City. After consulting with Mr. Herndon, he consented, on condition that he should be permitted to speak upon political questions, setting a day in the following February. This was readily agreed to, and he at once set himself diligently to the work of preparation.

The people of the United States were wonderfully "sectional" in the year 1859. The North knew little of the South, and the South knew almost nothing of the North. The West was the very symbol of vagueness and uncertainty to the people of the East. The people of the West, other than immigrants from the seaboard States, did but dimly bear in mind their relations to the older settlements between their homes and the Atlantic.

There were therefore few men in Illinois who could comprehend the significance of the invitation to Mr. Lincoln to speak in New York, or see how high, how very rare a compliment was thereby offered him. The great East teemed with eloquent men,—lawyers, scholars, statesmen, theologians,—and yet its chief city asked to hear a man who as yet had won no tangible eminence in either of these characters. Except as a local celebrity, made such in recent political campaigns, it was supposed that he had never been heard of. This was in a measure true, for he had been felt rather than heard, and all the more did men desire to see and hear him.

No previous effort of his life cost him so much hard work as did that Cooper Institute speech. When finished, it was a masterly review of the history of the slavery question from the foundation of the government, with a clear, bold, statesmanlike presentation of the then present attitude of parties and of sections. It exhibited a careful research, a thorough knowledge and understanding of political movements and developments, that staggered even the most laborious and painstaking students. It showed a grasp, a breadth, a mental training, and



a depth of penetration which compelled the admiration of critical scholars. Those who heard and those who afterwards read it in print alike filed it away as an historical document. Those who listened to its delivery acknowledged with one voice that the country possessed and had now discovered one more great man and great orator.

Nothing like this had been at all expected, although enough was already known of Mr. Lincoln to call together in Cooper Institute an audience which astonished him. The great hall was crowded with the best citizens of New York. The members of that throng had all of them listened to many celebrated speakers and to what they deemed great speeches. They were cultivated, intelligent, critical, but they were willing to be amused, or even interested, by a first-class specimen of Western "stump oratory." They knew sufficiently well that the tall, ungainly, awkward man in black who arose upon the platform to be introduced by William Cullen Bryant had had no educational advantages. He was a coarse fellow, of low origin, who had never been to college or moved in polished society. He had not so much as distinguished himself as a soldier, office-holder, editor, nor had he ever written a book. It was said of him that he told funny stories well, and that he had a strange faculty for holding the attention of a Western gathering of rude, illiterate people.

Very vague indeed were the notions and expectations of the multitude when the speaker began, but it was not long before an unlooked-for light began to dawn upon them. Slowly the minds of all took in the idea that this was an address, not to them only, but to the entire American people.

Mr. Lincoln had toilsomely prepared, and was now uttering, a declaration of the causes, principles, and purposes which underlay the existence and action, past, present, and to come, of the Republican party. He had also fallen but little short of combining a political platform with an "Inaugural Address."

The effect may be well expressed in the words with which

the next day's issue of the New York *Tribune*, February 28, 1860, prefaced its report of the speech: "No man ever before made such an impression on his first appeal to a New York audience."

Neither has any other man since then approached it, for that speech stands alone in the oratorical annals of the great city.

Mr. Lincoln's further errand in the East had been to visit his son Robert, then a student at Harvard; but invitations to speak at other points poured in upon him, and he had no thought of refusing. Everywhere, as he went, he took the minds of men and women captive, and left behind him an impression which could not pass away. Everywhere, also, he was himself taking careful notes of men and things and perfecting his knowledge of the people and the country he was so soon to rule. He returned to his home a man better and more widely known than nine out of every ten who sit out a long term in the United States Senate, or than ninety-nine out of every hundred who are elected governors of States.

The Republican National Convention had been called to meet at Chicago on the 16th of May, 1860, and the Republican State Convention of Illinois was held at Decatur on the 9th and 10th of the same month. The friends of Mr. Lincoln resolved that the one should prepare their candidate for the other. They did not reveal their plans to him, but they laid them well and they carried them out to perfection.

When the State Convention assembled for business, an enormous crowd of delegates and other citizens packed the large temporary structure erected for the occasion, but Mr. Lincoln was not upon the platform.

Governor Oglesby arose and said:

"I am informed that a distinguished citizen of Illinois, and one whom Illinois will ever be delighted to honor, is present; and I wish to move that this body invite him to a seat upon the stand." He paused a moment, and then he added, in a loud, clear voice:

“ Abraham Lincoln ! ”

The scene which followed is indescribable for its tumultuous enthusiasm. No way could be made through the dense, excited, shouting throng, and Mr. Lincoln was borne bodily, over their heads and shoulders, to the place of honor. The order of business went on for a while, and then Governor Oglesby arose again :

“ There is an old Democrat outside who has something he wishes to present to this convention.”

There was a roar of assent from every direction, mingled with some few doubts and objections. Then the door of the “ wigwam ” swung open, and a strong old man marched in, shouldering two fence-rails of moderate size surmounted by a banner inscribed, in large letters :

### “ TWO RAILS

FROM A LOT MADE BY ABRAHAM LINCOLN AND JOHN HANKS,  
IN THE SANGAMON BOTTOM, IN THE YEAR 1830.”

The hearty-looking, sunburned bearer was old John Hanks himself, and he had come to do his part in making his old friend President of the United States. He and his burden were fitting representatives of the old days of toil, darkness, and privation, and the vast throng arose as one man to do honor to the striking testimony they brought with them. In an instant Abraham Lincoln, “ the rail-splitter,” was accepted as the representative of the working man and the type and embodiment of the American idea of human freedom and possible human elevation. The applause was deafening. But it was something more than mere applause : it was the tempestuous outburst of a tidal wave of strange and irresistible enthusiasm which swept from Decatur to Chicago and thence over the whole country.

Silence came as Mr. Lincoln rose to respond to the vociferous demand for a “ speech.” It was not yet, however, the

right time for him to speak, and he made no blunder. He said :

“Gentlemen : I suppose you want to know something about those things. Well, the truth is, in the year 1830 John Hanks and I did make some rails, in the Sangamon bottom, to fence a piece of land. I don’t know whether these are some of those rails or not. The fact is, I don’t think they are a credit to the makers. But I do know this: I made rails then and I think I could make better rails than these now.”

Shouts and laughter accompanied and followed the few remarks of the “Illinois Rail-splitter,” but the work of capturing that convention was accomplished. There was not a breath of opposition, afterwards, to a resolution that—

“Abraham Lincoln is the first choice of the Republican party of Illinois for the Presidency, and its delegates to the Chicago Convention are hereby instructed to use all honorable means to secure his nomination, and to cast the vote of the State as a unit for him.”

On the 16th of the month the National Convention of the party assembled at Chicago. With it came swarms of the eager friends of many Presidential aspirants. The city was crowded as it never had been before, and the excitement was at fever-heat even before the appointed day.

Two days were consumed in agreeing upon a party platform and in a vigorous canvass of delegates with reference to the coming ballots for nominations.

The third day came and the balloting began. It was well known beforehand that on the first ballot the highest vote would be given to William H. Seward of New York, but no man could form a valuable opinion as to what might or might not take place afterwards. Mr. Seward’s actual vote was 173½, but it was a surprise to many that Mr. Lincoln should at once come next in rank with 102. The surprise increased upon the announcement of the second ballot, when Mr. Seward’s vote arose to 184½ and Mr. Lincoln followed him with 181. It was

manifest that the friends of minor candidates were breaking away from their men under the tremendous pressure and excitement of the hour, and that the issue lay between the leading representatives of the East and the West. It is worthy of note that Mr. Lincoln himself had remarked, some days before the Convention, that Seward or he would get the nomination.

The call of States began upon the third ballot. As it proceeded votes flew fast from every quarter, until it was known that Mr. Lincoln had  $231\frac{1}{2}$ , only a vote and a half less than the required number. The Convention held its breath for a moment, and then Mr. Cartter of Ohio arose to change four of the votes of that State delegation from Mr. Chase to Mr. Lincoln.

The nomination was sealed, and the great "wigwam" shook with the excited outburst that followed. No such enthusiasm could have greeted any other result, for the fire kindled at Decatur had been burning hotter and hotter every hour, and it must be said that the men of Illinois had scattered the brands of it well and zealously. Hannibal Hamlin of Maine was named for Vice-President, and the Convention shortly adjourned.

All through these proceedings Mr. Lincoln remained at Springfield. He was continually advised by his friends as to the course of events, and took a deep though undemonstrative interest in the news they sent him. He was not at all indifferent, and made no vain and weak pretense of being so; but he exhibited excellent self-control. This was not the kind of excitement which could disturb a mind so disciplined as his had been. On the great third day, when all was seemingly trembling in the balance, he chatted with friends, read dispatches, commented freely on the prospects of other candidates, but gave utterance to no opinion as to his own,—until the telegraphic announcement of the result of the second ballot was handed him. A single flash of personal feeling and human ambition

escaped him then, for, with familiar reference to his powerful rival, he exclaimed :

“I’ve got him !”

He was not thinking of himself too much, however. Shortly afterwards came another message informing him of his nomination.

While the streets of Springfield rang with “cheers for Lincoln” from men of all parties, proud of their friend and neighbor, he turned quietly away from their plaudits and congratulations, remarking :

“Well, gentlemen, there’s a little short woman at our house who is probably more interested in this dispatch than I am; and, if you will excuse me, I will take it up and let her see it.”

On the following day the appointed Committee of the Convention, headed by its president, arrived in Springfield with the formal announcement of its action. They found the man of their choice, contrary to their expectation, sad, gloomy, already depressed by the crushing burden they had come to lay upon him. He received their address with great dignity, replying in a few well-chosen sentences full of deep feeling. He promised to answer them in writing after a more careful consideration of the resolutions adopted by the Convention. The formal acceptance, made the following day, was very brief, but left nothing to be asked for in its manner or its substance.

The several forces which were to contend for mastery in the political campaign of 1860 were marshaled in a manner significant of the chaotic state to which all the old party organizations had been reduced. After a vain effort to retain its long-accustomed solidity, the Democratic party had angrily split in twain. What may be called its Northern division nominated Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois for President and Herschel V. Johnson of Georgia for Vice-President. The other division—the pro-slavery, or Southern—nominated John C. Breckinridge of Kentucky for President and Joseph Lane of Oregon for Vice-President. The persistent remainder of the



old Whig party, after passing through several mutations of name and searching out vain excuses for continuance, now appeared for the last time, as the "Constitutional Union Party," under the nominal leadership of John Bell of Tennessee, as its candidate for the Presidency, and of Edward Everett of Massachusetts as a possible Vice-President. The voting population of the country had therefore an uncommonly wide discretion offered them.

## CHAPTER XXV.

## ELECTED PRESIDENT.

The Great Canvass of 1860—The Critical Election—Southern Threats of Civil War—Office-seekers Early—A Wise Decision—Cabinet-making—Preparing for the Trouble to Come—A Nation Without a Ruler.

DURING the political canvass which followed the Chicago Convention Mr. Lincoln remained at Springfield. It was a matter of manifest propriety that he should maintain as much reserve as was consistent with his customary frankness. He continued to meet all men freely and avoided none who desired to see or speak with him.

Those few short months were a time of feverish and hourly increasing excitement to the entire people, and most of all to the man whom the clearest-minded politicians, North and South, himself included, knew they were about to elect as their Chief Magistrate. He passed the dense and burdened days, therefore, as an intense student of all the present symptoms and probable results of that fierce fermentation.

The collision he had foreseen and prophesied twenty years before was at hand. The crisis he had more publicly formulated in his Bloomington speech was hourly drawing nearer. Hundreds of Southern orators and writers plainly declared that the election of Lincoln would precipitate the struggle he had foretold. They were the exponents of a feeling more deep and more willful than careless observers knew or would believe. Their real meaning was that they would regard such an election as their justification for themselves precipitating the struggle. It was more a threat than a warning.

Great pains were taken, by enemies as well as friends, to

keep Mr. Lincoln well advised of these hostile utterances and of all known preparations for such action as would fulfill threats. Enough of such preparation showed itself, almost publicly, to indicate its extent. Even the methods of its veiled and secret operations were from time to time suggested.

For none of this treasonable agitation, or its consequences, could Mr. Lincoln hold himself in any manner responsible. It forced upon his mind, however, the necessity he was under of speedily establishing his own relations to public affairs and to the future of the country.

The popular vote was given on the 6th of November, with a result which showed that if the adversaries of the Republican party could have united upon any one candidate they would have elected him; but the same was also true of each of the four parties. The Lincoln electoral tickets received an aggregate of 1,857,610 votes; those of Mr. Douglas, 1,291,574; those of Mr. Bell, 646,124; those of Mr. Breckinridge, 850,082. The popular majority against Mr. Lincoln, if it could have been so counted, was 930,170; but would, by a like reckoning, have been much larger against either of the others.

When the Electoral Colleges of the several States came together and performed their official duties, Mr. Lincoln received 180 votes; Mr. Breckinridge, 72; Mr. Bell, 30; Mr. Douglas, 12. That, however, was but the formal declaration of a result which was already known to the whole country.

Hardly was the popular vote counted, on the 6th of November, before the current of office-seekers and other political pilgrims to Springfield swelled rapidly to a sort of flood, and an important part of Mr. Lincoln's Presidential powers and perplexities at once demanded his attention.

It was popularly taken for granted, at the first, that the incumbents of all federal offices would presently be removed and that their places would be filled by new men, selected from the victorious party. Mr. Lincoln had been thinking of this. He understood the situation and the strength it brought

to him. No other President ever had at his disposal more than a fraction of the appointing power, for good or evil, which would be his. He could hardly have had a vision, however, of the multitudinous offices afterwards to be created and added.

Here was, therefore, the opportunity for an exhibition of broad and courageous statesmanship. He plainly saw that the administration soon to fall into his hands would need all the support it could by any means obtain. He saw that he could not assume the position of the paymaster of a greedy party if he would long remain the ruler of a nation. It was not many days before he was reported, and truly, to have declared his intention of appointing to official positions Democrats as well as Republicans, and of retaining faithful and capable public servants wherever possible. There was a groan of dismay and wrath among the office-seekers, but subsequent developments proved that the President-elect was prepared to stand firmly by his wise and just decision.

As a sort of corollary of this, it was also made to be understood that Mr. Lincoln regarded the federal appointments at his disposal as in the nature of a public trust, and not at all as his private property or to be apportioned among his friends, relatives, or personal adherents. There was to be little advantage to any man in the fact that he had known Mr. Lincoln for many years; or had exchanged small favors with him; or employed him in law-business; or said "Good-morning" to him, daily.

This was terribly unexpected, and there were some hundreds who could never afterwards see that he had not been ungrateful, they could hardly say for what. Not a few declared him unmindful of his most sacred obligations—to themselves.

The great mass of tax-payers and other citizens, for whose uses the offices were created and their duties performed, were all the better satisfied. At the same time, the sting of defeat rankled less dangerously in the hearts of some hundreds of

thousands of people, whose good will was essential to the stability of what was, to all intents and purposes, a new government.

It was from the first manifest that Mr. Lincoln would have peculiar difficulty in the formation of his Cabinet. He was busy with that duty even before election-day. He would gladly have obtained the services of some well-known representative of the declared Union-loving element at the South, but no such man could be found. There was not one of sufficient prominence who loved the Union well enough to help an Abolition President to preserve it. Every day that came brought with it something to render the search more hopeless. It was therefore necessary to confine the selections made at first to the narrow circle of the chiefs of the Republican party. A majority of the Cabinet, when at last it was completed, were men who had received votes as candidates for nomination in the Chicago Convention. The man who called them around him had risen above all jealousies, all rivalries, all selfish considerations. The settlement of this important matter was not finished until after Mr. Lincoln's arrival in Washington, but enough had been done to assure him of the active co-operation of the strong men of his own political faith.

Perceiving how rapid was and would be the unification of the elements with which the nation was to struggle for its life, it was the part of a sound and wise statesmanship to consolidate, with all possible speed, the power which was to meet the now inevitable shock of battle. The difficulties of Mr. Lincoln's position at that time have been but little understood. The majority of those who have written about them have strangely taken it for granted that he was in a manner ignorant of the course of events. They have regarded him as being as much taken by surprise by each successive development as might be any private citizen who puzzled over the news brought to him, correctly or incorrectly, by his favorite newspaper.

On the contrary, Mr. Lincoln's preparatory education from childhood, supplemented now through a thousand channels of information, public and private, placed him beyond and above the possibility of a surprise.

There was an absorbing problem constantly before him now, and his every act and word had to be weighed with reference to the danger of an adverse, because premature, solution. It was, simply stated, whether the surely coming storm could be delayed until the new government should be placed in possession of the national capital, and that also with the nominal acquiescence of the government which was passing away; for four months had yet to elapse between November of the election and March of the inauguration, and in four months what might not happen! Considering what the former government had been in its nature, plans, purposes, and subserviencies, the best interests of the whole country were served by the fact that for the time being there was no President at Washington, and that the Disunion leaders were acting for themselves upon that well-understood hypothesis. Mr. Buchanan, the nominal President, weak, vacillating, out of date, groped blindly around among the jarring factions of his kaleidoscopic Cabinet, while its traitors and perjured conspirators were begging their more hot-headed confederates in the cotton States not to spoil their vile work for them by over-haste. At the same time, the loyal members of the same remarkable junta of "constitutional advisers" were struggling manfully to keep in hand something in the outward semblance of a "Union" to hand over to the man whom the people had selected to take the control of it. How nearly they came to an utter failure was well known to Mr. Lincoln, from day to day. The gloom deepened around him and within him, until his best friends could but see the shadows on his face, the circles under his eyes, the intensity of the sadness in which he had been called to make his dwelling-place. He himself was aware of this external effect and saw a danger in it. Lest it



should influence unfavorably the spirits and courage of those about him, and go out through them in widening ripples of despondency, he more frequently than ever now assumed an outward air of cheerful jocularly. It served both for a convenient and useful mask and for a genuine relief. Behind it he studied the chaotic Unionism slowly forming and moving into activity at the North, and the much more rapidly developing Rebellion at the South. No other fact of necessary statesmanship was plainer than this: for the creation of a strong, steady, and permanently trustworthy public opinion at the North, the South must be permitted to put itself openly, manifestly, outrageously in the wrong with reference to the central government. There was no doubt that it would shortly do so under the fostering care of Mr. Buchanan and his Cabinet. A strong-minded man in the executive chair would surely have given the plotters of secession some ghostly shadow of an excuse for violent measures. As it was and as it continued to be, the savage brutality of their successive acts remains to be recorded as without any other palliation than the presumption of their fellow-citizens in electing a President openly hostile to the purchase and sale of human beings.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

## CASUS BELLI.

Secession Activities—Lincoln's Policy—In a Trying Position—South Carolina Takes the Lead—The Confederate States of America—Traitors in Congress—Capture of United States Forts and Forces—A Campaign of Statesmanship—Vain Premonitions—A Last Meeting.

THAT the more advanced and determined secessionists were prepared to regard the triumph of the Republican party and the election of Abraham Lincoln as an ample justification of anything they might choose to do, had already been openly declared in numberless unofficial utterances.

The extreme view held by so many found a more effective if not a more definite expression in a circular letter sent by Governor Gist of South Carolina to the governors of the other "cotton States" on the 5th of October, 1860. The governors of the slave States subsequently known as "border States" were not supposed to be yet prepared to return a favorable response, and were therefore not appealed to. The letter was an invitation to concerted and allied action in case the November election should result as was expected, and its language requires no explanation:

"If a single State secedes, we will follow her. If no other State takes the lead, South Carolina will secede (in my opinion) alone, if she has any assurance that she will soon be followed by another or other States; otherwise it is doubtful."

The answers, of different dates, varied in character and not all favorable, were probably all in Governor Gist's hands on or before election-day. That of the Governor of Georgia contained a very significant and important declaration. He said that, in his opinion, the people of Georgia would "wait for

some overt act" from the Lincoln government. It was not at all necessary to inform the secession conspirators that an "overt act" of their own would answer their purposes equally as well. If they had awaited a sufficient provocation from the wise, watchful, patriotic statesman who was then studying their course so carefully at Springfield, their conspiracy would have died of old age upon their hands. Mr. Lincoln had made up his mind and determined his policy as to that point, and he afterwards took every opportunity of publicly so saying.

The circular letter was "secret," but the "message" of Governor Gist to the Legislature of South Carolina, November 5, 1860 (published on the day preceding the general election-day), was an all-sufficient public warning. He advised the assembling of a State Convention and the purchase of arms and other war-material. From this date, if not from an earlier day, Mr. Lincoln was entitled to consider a war as actually begun, and to guide himself accordingly. Upon what he might say or do, or leave unsaid and undone, would manifestly depend, in great measure, the character and results of the now inevitable hostilities. He was already burdened with the delicate task of so directing the moral forces he represented, and over which he exercised an increasing control, that they should not too soon assume an aggressive attitude at any point. It is hardly possible to overestimate the tact and patience with which he successfully accomplished this first duty and victory of his administration.

The war-spirit of the South was most intense in South Carolina, but was there focalized rather than localized. The daily energy displayed by the people of that State in their open preparations for bloodshed presented an "object-lesson" which Mr. Lincoln and a few other men comprehended perfectly. At the same time, the conservative element at the South very sincerely underestimated the determination of their neighbors, and the great mass of the Northern people refused to regard the matter as anything more serious than an uncom-

monly absurd outburst of bluster and parade. The election took place, and resulted as has been stated, in the election of Mr. Lincoln.

The State Convention of South Carolina, summoned by the Act of the Legislature called for in the message of Governor Gist, was chosen on the 6th of December. It met at Columbia, the capital of the State, adjourned to Charleston, and almost immediately, December 20, adopted an "Ordinance of Secession," whereby it pretended to sever the bond between South Carolina and the Union, and to terminate all right, power, and authority of the general government within the limits of the State.

With sundry variations in the manner, form, and declared causes and purposes of their alleged going out, the other "cotton States" followed. Mississippi "seceded" January 9, 1861; Florida, January 10; Alabama, January 11; Georgia, January 19; Louisiana, January 26; and Texas on the 1st of February.

It was sure to follow that these States would league themselves together in a bond of some kind, as suggested in the secret circular letter of Governor Gist.

Their representatives at Washington, in House and Senate, in a paper signed by about half their number, advised that such action should be taken promptly. These and other gentlemen afterwards held seats and exercised Federal legislative functions, to hold and exercise which was ludicrously as well as criminally illegal if the several secession ordinances were of any binding or effective power. The document itself was actually made public, as a preparatory step, some days prior to the secession of South Carolina. It did but embody, for specific uses, the matter and manner of a vast correspondence both public and private.

Pursuing the plan laid down for them, the several seceded States appointed delegates to a species of inter-State convention, to be held at Montgomery, Alabama. These delegates

met in that city on the 4th of February. So well were they drilled beforehand in the task allotted them, that on the 8th of that month they announced to the world a provisional government, under the name of "The Confederate States of America."

Before that joint and formal action could be taken, much and very important separate and local rebellion had been vigorously transacted. Even before adopting her own Ordinance of Secession, the disunionists who acted as the State of South Carolina had determined upon the early capture of the forts in Charleston harbor, which were the specific property of the United States Government. These were Castle Pinckney, a small affair near the city and of no importance; Fort Moultrie, a larger structure, on Sullivan's Island, occupied by about one company of United States regular troops; and, the most important of all, as commanding the approaches from the sea, Fort Sumter, a well-built and, if properly manned and provisioned, all but impregnable fortress on a natural shoal raised to an artificial island, near the harbor-mouth.

So rapid and so public were the preparations for the seizure of these forts that Major Anderson, the officer in command of Fort Moultrie, found himself compelled to transfer his small force, with such stores as he could easily move, to Fort Sumter, this being his sole tenable defense. He did so secretly, on the night of December 26, only six days after the formal act of secession of the State. From that day forward Fort Sumter was as regularly and actively besieged as was ever any other fortification in any other war.

On the morning of January 9, the steamer "Star of the West," carrying the national flag and bearing needed supplies to Fort Sumter, was fired upon and driven back to sea by the rebel batteries besieging Major Anderson and his forlorn squad.

Nearly similar was the subsequent course of events at Pensacola, Florida. Armed forces of the incipient rebellion compelled the surrender of the Pensacola Navy Yard. Lieutenant

Slemmer, with forty-six men of the regular army and thirty seamen from the Navy Yard, was obliged to abandon Forts Barrancas and McRee, on the mainland, and occupy Fort Pickens, on Santa Rosa Island, at the harbor-entrance.

On February 18, General Twiggs, commanding the United States troops in Texas—but himself a traitor—surrendered to an armed force of rebels the national forts, military posts, and property in that State, and made preparations for an evacuation.

There were numberless minor acts of open hostility, but the recital of these is enough to show that the War of the Rebellion had been in active prosecution on the part of the South, with continual and important military successes won for them, during three full months before Mr. Lincoln could, on the 4th of March, assume the nominal direction of public affairs.

Through all that time nothing whatever of a warlike nature was done by the Federal government, beyond some dilatory and faint-hearted attempts to send to its servants, shut up in Southern forts, reasonable supplies of food.

The War Office, under the charge of the traitor Floyd, up to the day of his resignation, December 31, was administered wholly in the interests of the conspiracy. The appointment of Mr. Holt as his successor secured as great a change as was possible, with President Buchanan limply sitting in the way of all patriotic and especially in the way of all manly and courageous action.

The services of the outgoing President were indeed unintentionally great, for they prevented the doing of any act to mar or interfere with the effect of the policy of Abraham Lincoln.

The latter fully grasped the situation from hour to hour. He well understood that an unwise word or act of his, particularly any utterance which could be construed as a threat of coercion or an expression of bitter feeling or even of just indignation, would be equivalent to a fatal military disaster. There was a vast mass of human tinder in existence, so situated



as to be pretty sure to burn for the side which should succeed in setting it on fire. It was yet an open question how far the conspirators would succeed in carrying with them the non-cotton-growing slave States.

An error of judgment on the part of Mr. Lincoln; an outburst of passion, of impatience, or of partisanship during the gloomy days of that long watchfulness and self-restraint, or even during the first few weeks of his legal term of office, would have lost to the Union at the outset the States of Missouri, Kentucky, Maryland, Delaware, the area which soon afterwards became West Virginia; and with these as dependencies would also have been lost, at least temporarily, Kansas, Southern Illinois, the control of the Mississippi River, and the military frontier of the Ohio and the Potomac.

This was the first campaign of the civil war, and its vast results were won by a wise, firm statesmanship. They were won before the reorganized nation had a regiment in the field, and while its real Commander-in-Chief was living in a two-story frame-house at Springfield, in the State of Illinois.

There was a constant and at times a vehement pressure brought to bear upon Mr. Lincoln by some of his more fiery-spirited political associates. He was urged to abandon his reticence and to make some public appeal that should "fire the Northern heart" as the heart of the South was firing, but he was deaf to all such urgency. He was not unready, indeed, with some apt and telling story with which to turn the subject and blind and cover his actual perception and purpose.

In the month of February, 1861, as a last preparation for his departure from Illinois, Mr. Lincoln paid a visit to his relatives in Coles County. He talked with old friends and neighbors; visited familiar scenes; stood for a moment by the grave of his father. More than all, he paid a visit of respect and affection to his now aged step-mother to whom he was so deeply indebted. He spoke of her to friends who were with him in terms of strong and tender feeling. He treated her with all

the devoted kindness of a son. The parting between them, writes Mr. Lamon, on the authority of persons present, was very touching. She embraced him with deep emotion, and said she was sure she should never see him again, for she felt sure that his enemies would assassinate him. He replied :

“No, no, mamma, they will not do that. Trust in the Lord and all will be well. We shall see each other again.”

He himself was deeply affected, but he was sincere in his rejection of her motherly warning. Only a few days later he could with difficulty be brought to acquiesce in the precautions insisted upon by Mr. Seward and other friends to avoid a well-authenticated plot for his murder on the way to Washington. Later still, when threatening letters were almost daily arriving at the Executive Mansion, the private secretary in charge of the President's mail was instructed to destroy all such missives at once and never to show them to Mr. Lincoln or to mention to others the fact of their reception.

He was justified in this, for the assassins, who at last added brute courage to their senseless hatred, did not send their intended victim any written warning. The threatening letters were but the cowardly expression of a bitterness which had no heart to go further.

Among the crowds who flocked to see Mr. Lincoln during this brief visit to the scene of some of his early experiences was old Hannah Armstrong. She also said to him that she should never see him again ; that something told her so. They would kill him. He only smiled and said to her :

“Hannah, if they do kill me, I shall never die another death.”

The forebodings which were really weighing upon him did not relate to himself, nor could any merely personal consideration have induced him to postpone for an hour the performance of a known duty.

The time was drawing near for his departure from the home he was never to see again. It was a plain, respectable-looking wooden dwelling, of two stories, and he had made no attempt

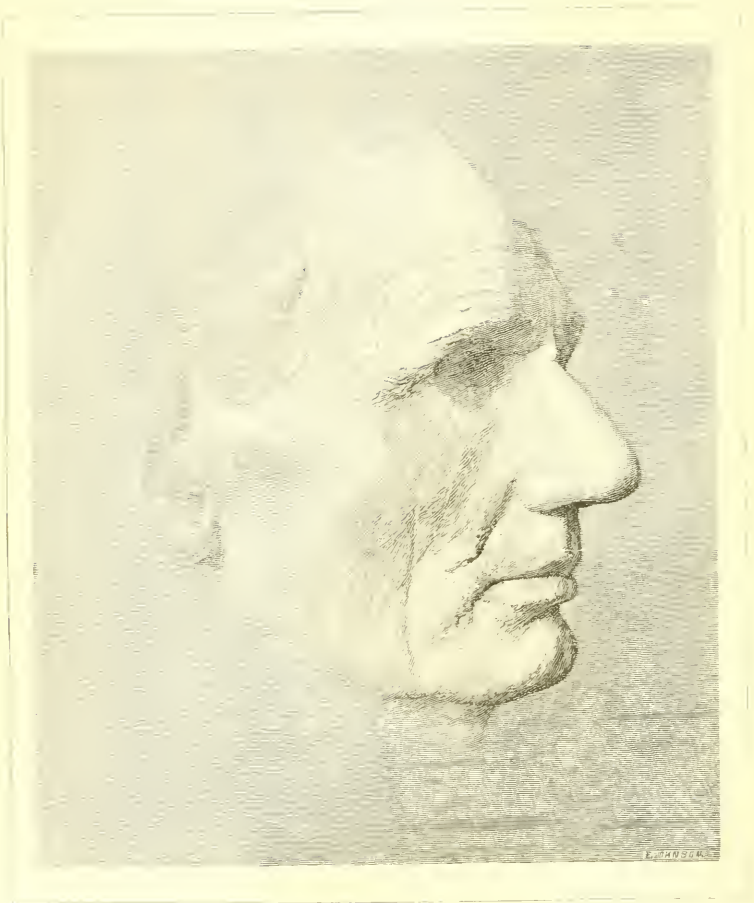
to beautify it. His law-office was a dusty, littered, carelessly kept place. Yet in the home and in the office he had thought and suffered much, and his heart and brain, in all their patience and growth, were linked to every commonplace feature of either. He asked Mr. Herndon as a favor, after settling their partnership affairs, not to take down the old sign of "Lincoln & Herndon" for at least four years. He had a hope or thought, however faint, that perhaps the days of its usefulness might return. They seemed almost happy days, in comparison with those to which he well knew he was going forward. His perception of the true nature of these has many witnesses. Men who remember how he looked during those last few weeks before his departure for Washington invariably dwell upon his weary, sad, haggard, woe-struck face and his bent and burdened form. There were darker circles under his eyes, and the far-away, indwelling look, so noticeable in some of his portraits, had grown deeper, gloomier than ever.

What is known as "happiness" had been denied him in his home relations—faithful, devoted, loving as his wife assuredly was, and utterly true to her as was he himself. The one love which can insure the highest married happiness had come to him once, and it had been buried, years and years ago, in a grave on the bank of the Sangamon. No breath of scandal ever assailed the purity of his domestic life. No smallest stain blotted the clear record of his integrity. Of all the citizens of Springfield, he was the best known, most highly honored, best beloved. But those treasures of human life which were as daily bread to the men and women who loved and honored him were impossible possessions to the man whose merry jokes they were so fond of repeating, and for whom they and others invented such a wealth of varied humor over and above all that he ever uttered.

Much has been said and written to prove that, at this particular time, he permitted himself to entertain forebodings and foreshadowings of the violent death which was to come to him.

It is as if a vague effort were made to account in some such stupid way for his access of sadness. Such premonitions come, as all men know, whether or not they are afterwards fulfilled. If verified, then superstition recalls them and points theatrically to the grim fulfillment. If not, then skepticism, with equal pertinence, forgets them, or gleefully mocks at a false prophecy. The shadow upon Lincoln's life was not cast before any such inadequate specter as the wonder-seekers have described, but by the coming agony of a great people. For long years he had been reading the signs of the times. He understood better than other men the meaning of the black portents on the political sky. They were to him full of blood, and they were dark with the horrible suffering of millions. Under and in face of all, the responsibility had been laid upon him of leading his people forward into the day of their trial and into the measureless woe before them. He had been carefully trained and developed in the providence of God for the assumption and bearing of that very burden; but all his training, while giving him the power to bear it, gave him no power to cast off any ounce of its crushing weight.





LIFE MASK OF LINCOLN.

*Taken by the Sculptor, Vokes, in the year 1860.*



## CHAPTER XXVII.

## PRESIDENT.

Speaking to the Nation—Diplomacy—Journey to Washington—In the Enemy's Country—The District of Columbia Militia—The Flood of Office-seekers—The Inauguration—The Address—The True Meaning of Secession—March, 1861.

MR. LINCOLN'S term of office as President of the United States was to begin on the 4th of March, 1861, but he determined to leave Springfield on the 11th of February.

The policy he was pursuing required that he should be seen and heard and more perfectly understood by the people. It was needful that his proceeding to Washington should be made under the concentrated watching of both friends and enemies.

So he decided and so he went. The feverish anxieties of millions attended every step of his journey, and the hearts of men grew hourly better prepared to sustain him after his arrival at the seat of government.

Such preparations for war as had yet been made at the North bore no comparison to those of the South. It was the 18th of February before even such a State as Massachusetts passed an Act to increase the State militia, and tendering men and money to the general government for the maintenance of the national authority. The great State of Pennsylvania did not take similar action until April 9th, and the State Legislature of New York passed its dilatory "war bill" on the 17th of that month. A great deal was doing, in a desultory and ill-directed way, by patriotic individuals, but it was not well that the zeal of even these should be so stimulated that their activity should endanger the diplomatic campaign for the mili-

tary possession of the border slave-States, or injuriously affect the sluggish and bewildered "public opinion" of important elements all over the North.

At different places on his road to Washington Mr. Lincoln made brief offhand speeches to the crowds which gathered to meet him, and to reply to various addresses more or less patriotic. Every one of these, however informal and apparently devoid of special effort, will bear a careful analysis with reference to their intended effect, as that can now be understood.

The manner of Mr. Lincoln's departure from Springfield expressed with honest unreserve his thoughts, feelings, and the simple purity of his aspirations. None the less did it clearly sound the key-note of all his subsequent official conduct and utterances. Seldom, indeed, have words so few and homely appealed so powerfully to the hearts of such a mighty multitude as in reality listened to his farewell speech to his neighbors.

The railway-train was nearly ready to bear him away, and a crowd had gathered to see it start. The rain was falling fast from a darkened sky, and the misty atmosphere suited well the gloomy feeling which replaced enthusiasm in the minds of the waiting assembly. Mr. Lincoln came out upon the platform of the rear car, standing in silence for a moment, bareheaded, in the rain. There were tears in his voice when he began to speak, but the huskiness departed as he went on and his tones grew clear and strong, though tremulous with emotion. He said:

"Friends: No one who has never been placed in a like position can understand my feelings at this hour,—nor the oppressive sadness I feel at this parting. For more than a quarter of a century I have lived among you, and during all that time I have received nothing but kindness at your hands. Here I have lived from my youth, until now I am an old man. Here the most sacred ties of earth were assumed. Here all my children were born, and here one of them lies buried. To you,

dear friends, I owe all that I have, all that I am. All the strange, checkered past seems to crowd now upon my mind. To-day I leave you. I go to assume a task more difficult than that which devolved upon Washington. Unless the great God who assisted him shall be with and aid me, I shall fail; but if the same omniscient Mind and almighty Arm that directed and protected him shall guide and support me, I shall not fail. I shall succeed. Let us pray that the God of our fathers may not forsake us now. To him I commend you all. Permit me to ask that, with equal security and faith, you will invoke his wisdom and guidance for me.

“With these few words I must leave you, for how long I know not. Friends, one and all, I must now bid you an affectionate farewell.”

The railway-train bore him away and they saw his face no more.

It is worthy of note, at this point, how entirely every trace of skepticism concerning God and his active providence in human affairs had vanished from the mind of Mr. Lincoln. The fact should also be noted that he had not enrolled himself as a member of any one sect, or declared his unquestioning acceptance of any one creed, selected from among the many formulas presented by professional theologians. The first fact becomes of greater importance and the second of less and less, henceforward. The man who could not lie and did not know how to be a hypocrite, publicly and before the world declared his simple faith, both then and afterwards. So doing, he continually called upon his countrymen to join him in acts of repentance, forgiveness, prayer, thanksgiving, hope, trust; reassuring them in God's name when their own hearts sank and their own faith failed. He waded through deep waters and found God with him there, and he reverently said so. It is too late now for any man rationally to accuse Abraham Lincoln of having acted and uttered a solemn lie.

There was nothing in the journey to Washington which put

upon it the appearance of a triumphal procession, in spite of several ill-advised local efforts in that direction. Crowds gathered to see and hear him, and there was much patriotic enthusiasm manifested, although there were many expressions of dissatisfaction at the moderate, pacific, and conciliatory nature of all the speeches made by Mr. Lincoln. He could see and understand that the hot-heads were in a small minority. To his ears, under and through all the multitudinous cheering, there plainly spoke the hoarse and boding monotone of the doubt and dread with which the hearts of men were filling.

It would seem, from current expressions in the daily press, that one great fact escaped every audience of all that heard him. Not one seemed to comprehend that the President-elect, in addressing it, was also speaking to a multitude of other audiences, North and South. Still less could some understand that the expressions they would have been glad to hear would have fallen from his lips with the effect of lost battles. It should have been, but was not, obvious to all that the one remaining hope for the speedy restoration of peace lay in such a restriction of the area and resources of the rebellion as should dishearten its leaders by convincing them of foregone failure. It was indeed a faint hope, but it was honest and merciful, and it was carefully encouraged by Mr. Lincoln in the hearts of the yet undecided masses of the disputable Southern areas, until they were made ready to turn in their wrath against the conspirators whose violence disappointed them.

On his arrival at Philadelphia, Mr. Lincoln received a grim warning that he had reached the borders of the doubtful territory for the control of which the rebel leaders were intriguing.

The State of Maryland was in a condition of fierce but somewhat vague fermentation, and the city of Baltimore was hardly less bitter against Abolitionism than was Richmond itself. On the other hand, it is equally true that if, at as early a day, Richmond could have been forcibly occupied and controlled as was Baltimore soon after this date, quite as much and as genuine a

“Union sentiment” would have been found there, or surely would have been developed by similar processes.

Mr. Lincoln’s responsible advisers were warned of what seemed to be a desperate plot for his murder while on the road to Washington. Whether or not their conclusions were well sustained by the evidence in their possession is of no importance whatever. They were convinced of the reality of the impending peril, and every consideration forbade to them or him the crime of running a needless risk of such a disaster. No question of mere vanity of individual courage could be entertained for a moment. The trip across Maryland was therefore made suddenly and in private, and the Chief Magistrate-elect of the United States entered the Capital unexpectedly to all, and without so much as a group of waiting officials to welcome him. There had been no attempt at personal disguise, nor any really undignified concealment on the part of Mr. Lincoln or the personal friends who accompanied him. Nevertheless, the whole affair was a sad commentary upon the well-understood attitude of pro-slavery feeling and purpose. All men knew that slavery had frequently committed murder on a small scale; that it was deliberately preparing to do murder on a large scale; and that its fiercer fanatics could not sanely be trusted to withhold their hands from any particular brutality.

The city of Washington itself, so far as its genuine popular feeling went, was hardly a part of the disputed territory. There was a strong and faithful Union element among its citizens, but this was in a sad minority both as to number and power. When the new Commander-in-Chief and President reached his hotel, he was, in a manner, within the enemy’s lines. He had stolen a march, however, and his very presence garrisoned the city for the Union.

There was very little indeed of any other garrison as yet, except a few marines at the Navy Yard, and a handful of artillerymen at the arsenal, not 500 in all. Regular organizations of Secessionists, some of them armed and equipped, existed,

met, drilled, within the city limits, and even in the offices and halls of more than one of the public buildings.

An attempt had been made to reorganize the local militia, for defense only, and not for service beyond the District of Columbia, but the results had been more instructive than encouraging. As early as January 2d, 1861, the War Department, advised by General Scott, assigned to this duty Captain Charles P. Stone of the regular army, as Inspector-General of the District of Columbia. General Stone's services were invaluable and were rendered under peculiar difficulties. He quickly made the discovery that the greater part of the official civilians of the District, and of the Capital in particular, like their friends and exemplars the Southern officers of the army and navy, were meditating if not actually preparing for a speedy exchange into the rebel service. The several militia organizations of the city were able to present but one well drilled and uniformed "crack" company, the National Rifles. This company, which afterwards rated in the new organization as "Company A, Third Battalion, District of Columbia Rifles," was composed of young gentlemen of good social standing and fairly represented the better classes of the municipality, and it placed on record a striking illustration of the situation. It speedily became so depleted by desertions Southward, including its captain, that it was necessary to fill its ranks anew with loyal clerks from the departments and with young men recently arrived from the North. When so filled up, it contained still a trace and remnant of the local militia, but its body was composed of representatives of nearly every loyal State, Virginia, Kentucky, and Missouri not excepted. The second company of the same battalion was composed almost entirely of Germans, and the third of a general mixture of native and foreign elements. Several other "battalions" were formed under Gen. Stone's management, but a well-grounded distrust of their fidelity prevented any very active use of them as a whole. After the first company named was made over and became truly



“national” it rendered good service. It was employed on guard-duty at the Long Bridge over the Potomac and elsewhere; to seize a river-steamer threatened with capture by the rebels; to occupy the railway-station at Annapolis Junction, and so hold open the gate for the New York Seventh to come safely in; and on the final invasion of Virginia it was the first to enter that State, across the Potomac. Still its history describes, more perfectly than it could in any other manner be described, the kind of loyalty Mr. Lincoln found waiting for him in Washington: the one military company the District owned broke ranks and went South.

Mr. Lincoln took rooms at Willard's Hotel on his arrival. He had yet a week of hard work between him and the 4th of March. He put himself at once in communication with the loyal members of Buchanan's Cabinet, and with that true-hearted and unswerving old patriot, Lieutenant-General Winfield Scott, of Virginia. The commonwealth possessed in the latter a pillar of honor that could not be and was not for a moment shaken.

The formal counting of the electoral votes in the presence of Congress had been duly performed on the 13th of February, and even before that date the tide of new men set in from the North. The city soon became crowded as it had never been before, although so large a percentage of its customary population, official and otherwise, was daily leaving it for more South-erly and congenial atmospheres.

There was something almost phenomenal in the crowd of hungry office-seekers. They filled the hotels and boarding-houses. They thronged the passages and anterooms of the public buildings. Hundreds of anxious politicians, large and small, came pouring in by every train, so ignorant of public affairs that they hardly knew what to apply for, and still less for what duties they were prepared. They came from every nook and corner of the country, and they brought at least one unmistakable comfort to Mr. Lincoln. Their very coming as-

sured him that the people they represented had an undisturbed confidence in the stability of the government. The masses failed to realize any danger of its overthrow. Men could not and did not see how nearly new was the fabric about to take shape in Mr. Lincoln's hands, or how completely the old order of things had passed away.

The tone of Washington "society" was intensely "secession," but, for the first time in its history, it found itself utterly bereft of political influence. Its feeble cry was quickly drowned in the flood of unreasoning loyalty from the North. It was all in vain that the unanimous pianos of the lady-rebels wore themselves out with pouring through spitefully open windows the "patriotic music" of the South. They kept it up until the day when the Twelfth New York regiment marched down Pennsylvania Avenue with its full brass band playing "Dixie" for dear life. Then the piano-players yielded in disgust, declaring that "the Yankees had robbed them of even their national airs."

The preparations made for the "inauguration ceremonies" on the 4th of March were somewhat as usual, but precautions were taken, of a police and military nature, against possible mob-action or any attempt at assassination.

For the first time in American history was any part of the people of the United States deemed unworthy to be trusted to keep the peace while a chosen President should take the oath of office.

A vast throng gathered in front of the eastern portico of the Capitol, upon the steps of which a temporary structure of wood had been erected for the occasion. At twelve o'clock, noon, the Buchanan Administration expired by limitation. Up to that hour Mr. Buchanan himself remained at the Capitol, engaged in signing bills. He then went to Willard's Hotel, to accompany Mr. Lincoln, and both Houses of Congress adjourned.

All remaining preparations were quickly completed, and the

Presidential procession formed upon Pennsylvania Avenue. It moved along with a slow dignity, undisturbed in any manner, yet bearing a heavy and somber air which seemed to be fully in sympathy with that of the crowds which stared at or accompanied it.

At about a quarter past one o'clock Mr. Lincoln reached the Senate Chamber, where the members of the two Houses, of the Supreme Court, of the Diplomatic Corps, the heads of executive departments, and other privileged persons, were already assembled. From thence, a few moments later, all passed on, in stately progress, to the platform from which Mr. Lincoln was to announce his purposes as President,—not to that throng only, but to the country and to the world.

He had given the finishing touches to his address that very morning. None knew so well as he what consequences would surely follow any blunder in tone or mistake in declaration. He looked worn and pale and anxious, but from the first to the last his voice rang out clear, firm, unhesitating, resonant with faith and courage, while its every tremor and modulation seemed to vouch for his sincerity. He was making his last appeal for peace and his last solemn protest against needless bloodshed. The address may be epitomized as an argumentative attempt to convince all whom it might concern that there was nothing in the past or present attitude or purposes of the Republican party, nor any possible action by the national government as it would be administered by himself, which could sanely be construed as a justification of revolution and civil war. There was in it, however, no expression which could be interpreted as an admission of the right of peaceable secession on the part of any State. On the contrary, it contained one clause which closed the door upon any hope which the conspirators may have entertained that the threatening aspect of affairs had affected his steady firmness. He said :

“The power confided to me will be used to hold, occupy, and possess the property and places belonging to the government

and to collect the duties and imposts; but beyond what may be necessary for these objects there will be no invasion, no using of force among the people anywhere."

He kept his word carefully afterwards, for he thus described the precise result obtained when, four years later, the last rebel army laid down its arms and surrendered. In these few words he condensed the most important visible expressions of American national sovereignty.

Towards the close of his argument Mr. Lincoln addressed himself altogether to the people of the seceded States and such other communities as seemed likely to follow their leading. He said:

"In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow-countrymen, and not in mine is the momentous issue of civil war. The government will not assail you. You can have no conflict without being yourselves the aggressors."

This was but a plain reiteration of his frequently declared position, and it was now more than ever perfectly understood and comprehended. The rebellion had already taken him at his word. It had made itself the aggressor at a hundred different places, and it was hourly preparing to strike such additional blows as should assume for it the full responsibility he so forcibly presented.

There is one other sentence in the address which is full of meaning. It tells in a few words a fundamental truth of the American national organism.

Of politics, in 1850, he had said to his friend Mr. Stuart: "The time will come when we must all be Democrats or Abolitionists."

Of the government and its constitution he had said, in 1858, in his Bloomington speech: "I believe this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved. It will become all one thing or all the other."

Of the territorial area involved he now said with equal clearness: "Physically speaking we cannot separate."

The leaders of the rebellion perfectly understood the axiom so enunciated, and they had laid their plans accordingly.

For more than a generation they had ruled the whole country through the clumsy machinery provided for them at Washington. Their "secession" now was but a first step in a design which proposed a more absolute, more sweeping, and more arbitrary domination.

They looked forward to the control of the entire territory of the United States, then to that of the whole continent to the Isthmus, and with that the absorption of the West Indies.

Slavery was aggressive as a necessity of its existence. Its rebuff in its attempt upon Kansas and Nebraska had but precipitated the more desperate undertakings of its bloody campaign for its life. At the hour when Mr. Lincoln was speaking, armed rebel forces were already preparing to seize New Mexico and the adjacent Territories. A well-devised conspiracy was at work in the free State of California. There was a strong pro-slavery element in the city of New York, hardly deigning to disguise itself under what now seems the wild project for slicing off that commercial metropolis by itself as "a free city."

In every place, and in whatever form, the true intent and meaning of every suggestion of dismemberment was the eventual unification of the United States as a Slave Empire.

The issue thus created was met squarely by Mr. Lincoln then and afterwards, but the hour was not ripe for its elaborate presentation. He was a ruler about to assume the direction of a war in which his opponents had had nearly their own way for three months. He was a commander-in-chief with a bankrupt treasury and without either army or navy. He was himself then standing upon a platform on the steps of a building some days' march within the enemy's lines. He was addressing himself to populations listening to his words as if

almost in search of causes of offence. He was compelled to clothe his plainest enunciations in such forms of speech as should not throw away communities and States by arraying angrily against him the very elements whereof he hoped and intended to make immediate use.

Read in the light of subsequent deeds and events, Mr. Lincoln's inaugural address must be given the high praise that it was a State paper equal to the demands of an unparalleled occasion.



## CHAPTER XXVIII.

## WAR.

The New Era—Unification of the South—Free Speech—Copperheads—The Cabinet—The White House—Confederate Ambassadors—Traitors in Office—The Border States—The Sumter Gun—The President's Call to Arms—April, 1861.

MR. JEFFERSON DAVIS was installed as President of the Southern Confederacy on the 18th of February, 1861, and the flag of rebellion, afterwards so well known as the "Stars and Bars," was formally adopted, on the 4th of March, as the emblem of organized pro-slavery war. Around the flag and its chosen bearer were rapidly grouped and solidified the ready elements of the great peril with which Mr. Lincoln had thus far dealt with such skillful and courageous conservatism.

The forces he was thenceforth to direct were ample but were as yet chaotic and tumultuous, and his first duties were mainly those of organization.

The last Congress of the Buchanan Administration had steadily drifted out of pro-slavery control. The consecutive departures of its ultra-Southern membership left it more and more a "Republican" body, politically speaking, but its Union-loving elements were irregularly stratified and were not yet prepared to work in unison. Its closing hours were signaled by the rejection of the weak work of the so-called "Peace Congress" and of what was known as the "Crittenden Compromise."

The timely death of these twin-children of legislative timidity relieved Mr. Lincoln of any annoying guardianship of what must have proved a perpetual minority.

On the adjournment of Congress and the unobstructed inauguration, the North as a whole and the Union men of the border States breathed more freely for a few days, but the war went steadily onward. The chosen chief of the rebellion, a man of intense individuality, despotic will, and much executive ability, was rapidly invested with powers which were only in name and form less than autocratic. He and his fellow-conspirators clearly perceived the necessity of forbidding and preventing any open division of popular sentiment in the districts under their control.

The structure of Southern society gave them all facilities, and they began at once a work of suppression, continued to the end of the war, which did not hesitate in the employment of needful methods and agencies. The most searching espionage was supplemented by the most pitiless cruelty, and in due time the rebellious region was effectively unified.

No similar assault upon or destruction of personal liberty of thought or speech or action was at all possible at the North. No such tyranny was called for, nor was it ever undertaken. It would have been as foreign to the nature of Mr. Lincoln as to the genius of the free people who sustained him. Both he and they were afterwards slow to adopt the simplest and most necessary repressive measures. From the first to the last the critics of the Administration used their tongues and pens with a freedom which was by no means altogether due to the general faith in their impotence for serious mischief. Doubtless contempt had its share, however, in the leniency extended at the North to the large class of politicians of traitorous tendencies who shortly came to be known as "Copperheads," from the venomous reptile of that name.

The selection of Mr. Lincoln's Cabinet was nearly completed when he took the oath of office. The group of men he now gathered around him was eminently representative, politically and geographically. William H. Seward, of New York, was appointed Secretary of State; Simon Cameron, of Pennsyl-

vania, Secretary of War; Gideon Welles, of Connecticut, Secretary of the Navy; Salmon P. Chase, of Ohio, Secretary of the Treasury; Caleb B. Smith, of Indiana, Secretary of the Interior; Edward Bates, of Missouri, Attorney-General; and Montgomery Blair, of Maryland, Postmaster-General.

Subsequent changes need not now be noted, but it was evident from the first that it would require a man of marked intellectual and moral superiority to be the actual guiding mind, governing will, and recognized chief among such men as these whose success as leaders was already notable. Many, indeed, were ready to offer an opinion that Mr. Lincoln would either be a puppet in their hands, tossed to and fro between opposing cabals as Mr. Buchanan had been, or that, for peace and quiet, he would soon drift under the sole management of some one strong mind and subtle purpose among his constitutional advisers. That there was never the slightest peril or sign of either disaster is a testimonial of the completeness with which he had already mapped out the course he meant to pursue. At the same time it speaks for the acuteness and patriotic readiness with which the Cabinet at once stepped out upon the path upon which they were to co-operate but not to lead.

The Executive Mansion was a curious study during many days and weeks following the inauguration. Its halls and offices were literally packed with human beings. There were days when the throng of eager applicants for office filled the broad staircase to its lower steps; the corridors of the first floor; the famous East Room; the private parlors; while anxious groups and individuals paraded up and down the outer porch, the walks, and the Avenue.

The entrance of the Cabinet officers upon their duties and appointing powers drew away much of this pressure after a while, and Mr. Lincoln was at once accused of transferring too much of his prerogative to his subordinates. That he should have relief would have been a physical necessity under any circumstances, but he now had more important matters on his

hands than the apportionment of partisan rewards of services. His kindly nature led him to surrender only too much of his time and strength to private hopes and ambitions. He had hardly time left him to eat and sleep.

The clerical work of the executive office under previous administrations had been comparatively small, and there was no existing law under which the force for its performance could be increased. The President of the United States was allowed but one "private secretary," on a very moderate stipend. To this office he appointed Mr. John G. Nicolay, who had already served him in that capacity. Now that the sheer need of work in hand called for a second private secretary, and Mr. John Hay was in fact made such, it was necessary to have him appointed a clerk in a department and "assigned to duty" at the White House. A few weeks later, when a third was needed, it was easy to summon to Mr. Nicolay's assistance Mr. William O. Stoddard, who had been already appointed the President's secretary to sign land-patents.

These three young men, with occasional help from department clerks detailed, were all the force with which Mr. Lincoln performed the ceaseless labors of the executive office during the earlier and stormier days of his administration.

That there was much transfer of "bureau work" to the several departments where it belonged requires no other explanation.

It was contrary to Mr. Lincoln's nature to meddle with petty details unnecessarily, but he was frequently drawn into what looked like meddling by his eager desire for exact information; by the real or apparent application of a principle; by the expression of personal good will or under the influence of some strong emotion. Those who accused him of listening too easily to the importunities of friends and the pressure of interested politicians knew very little of the tidal waves which daily broke at his door to recede in a grumbling "undertow" of bitter dissatisfaction.

The days of the first week were expended in making the more important official appointments to office; in strengthening somewhat the shadowy military force at command; but more than all in gaining time for the sure operation of the less visible forces which were steadily depriving the conspirators of the advantages so nearly within their reach.

On the 12th of March there arrived in Washington three very extraordinary ambassadors. Mr. Roman, of Louisiana, Mr. Forsyth, of Alabama, and Mr. Crawford, of Georgia, were empowered by the Confederate Government to open diplomatic relations with the Government of the United States. They were not private adventurers, but commissioners duly nominated by the Confederate President, and confirmed February 25 by the Confederate Senate. Their errand, to express it concisely and correctly, was to demand and accept the pusillanimous surrender, by Mr. Lincoln, to the Rebellion in arms, of all it had already seized and as much more as it could lay its hands upon. It was their business to invite him to imitate stupidly the intelligent treachery of General Twiggs when the latter surrendered the troops and forts in Texas.

The three commissioners were not arrested for treason. They came unnoticed and departed unhindered. Mr. Lincoln was bitterly blamed for this by over-zealous patriots, who could not discern that the brazen impudence of such an embassy was also a plain expression of the dullness behind it which could be guilty of such a blunder.

The North was now at last beginning to wake up and arm itself. The new government at Washington was rapidly completing its organization. Swift search and inquiry was making among army and navy officers and civil employees of the departments as to what might be expected of them. It was pre-eminently needful that the government should know something of the probable capacity and fidelity of its agents before entrusting them with the execution of war measures. The absence or defectiveness of such knowledge, in the outset, and the se-

lection and assignment of new men to varied duties, and not at all any imaginable vacillation or uncertainty of the President's purposes, operated as a kind of partial paralysis for a time.

A complete illustration of this peculiar difficulty of Mr. Lincoln's position during those long, weary weeks of March is offered by the subsequent destruction of the Norfolk Navy Yard, in Virginia, instead of its retention as a military post. With all its vast uses, it was lost to the nation by the base treachery of the very officers in charge of it; its loyal commander, Commodore McCauley, being powerless among his rebel subordinates. Mr. Lincoln might well act cautiously until a species of weeding-out process had performed itself more thoroughly by the actual personal seceding of the Secessionists in Federal offices.

On the 6th of the month the Confederate Government issued its first formal call for troops. Only one hundred thousand were summoned, but it had at least that number already, more or less perfectly organized and armed, under competent officers.

The South contained much more than its proportion of West Point graduates, retired from military service. To these were rapidly added no less than 269 officers whose secession proclivities led them to resign their positions in the United States army. How large a power of courage, dash, genius, and military science these men carried with them the course of the war was yet to show; but the army was an untrustworthy machine until they were all out of it.

The Confederate statesmen were providing their proposed campaign with materials as well as men. Their emissaries in New York and elsewhere were buying and shipping to them all obtainable arms and munitions of war. Larger purchases than ever before were making in the West of provisions of all sorts, and the cargoes were hastening down the Mississippi.

The energy, foresight, and ability displayed in this direction



were undeniable; but in spite of all this and their relentless determination, they were wasting time which Mr. Lincoln was using.

He was in sore need of every hour. The secession element in all the doubtful regions was in a state of fermentation, nearly ready for an explosion. Should this be unduly hastened, no human wisdom could forecast the consequences. As early as December 24, 1860, the Richmond, Va., *Enquirer* newspaper had editorially recommended that Virginia and Maryland should unite in resuming possession of the District of Columbia and the city of Washington. The seizure could then have been made irresistibly, or at any date thereafter up to the first day of May. Both States contained organized military bodies of sufficient strength, composed of men who merely waited an apparent pretext and some sort of lawful authority for active operations.

Delay was their defeat. The national capital and the territory north of it, to the free-State lines, which lay at the mercy of the rebellion all through the month of March, grew less and less so from the first of April onward. That its danger then became more apparent to all men was but because all men began to see more plainly. By that time the new national government was organized very nearly as thoroughly as was its somewhat older antagonist at Montgomery. It had at its command no troops to speak of, but the States of Virginia and North Carolina were still left as a neutral belt between the bare and undefended lines of the Potomac and that part of the rebel forces which was prepared for immediate battle.

It was impossible that this state of things should continue much longer. The Confederacy was suffering too much from it and found at last a pretext for its forcible termination.

The siege of Fort Sumter had thus far been confined to a rigid blockade, and the unmilitary millions of the American people were unable to realize that this was as distinct and positive an act of war as the resonant use of gunpowder. The gar-

ri-son was now running short of provisions, and it was both the right and duty of the government at Washington to supply them. The performance of this duty was delayed to the last moment consistent with honor or humanity, in order that the inevitable consequences might also be postponed as long as possible.

On the 8th of April a government messenger read to Governor Pickens, of South Carolina, at Charleston, the following brief message:

"I am directed by the President of the United States to notify you to expect an attempt will be made to supply Fort Sumter with provisions only, and that if such attempt be not resisted no effort to throw in provisions, arms, or ammunition will be made without further notice or in case of an attack on the fort."

The relieving expedition did not sail from New York until the morning of the 9th, and it never performed its mission. There was something of confusion and delay in its official management, and a rough sea helped to defeat the zeal of its brave commander; but it had already been denied a landing.

After some preliminary exchanges of threats and responses between the besiegers and the besieged, the political mine had been fired, and the explosion had blown away all remaining uncertainties. The rebel authorities gravely decided that Mr. Lincoln's notification of his intention to prevent starvation in Fort Sumter was "a declaration of war." Only the grim and ghastly consequences of their decision conceal the humorous absurdity of it. At half-past four o'clock, on the morning of April 12, the first gun, "the Sumter gun," was fired, and the first shell struck the fort. It was a well-aimed shot. No harm was done to the fortress, but Mr. Lincoln's most serious perplexities were knocked away for him. The "policy of delay" was shattered forever, at the very moment when Mr. Lincoln had himself decided that he could not continue it with advantage nor abandon it without peril. He knew that every

man in the country could hear that cannon and understand the meaning of that bursting shell.

For the Rebellion, also, that shot and those which followed it were apparently well aimed. The garrison of Fort Sumter was compelled to haul down the Stars and Stripes and surrender, on Sunday morning, April 14; but the capture of the fortress was only a part of the seeming Secession victory. Already the war-fever had spread with electric swiftness through North Carolina, Virginia, Arkansas, Maryland, and the news of such a victory augmented it with a sudden power.

The war—for such the state of hostilities must be called—had now continued for four full months with fluctuating fortunes, and the rebels had many good reasons for rejoicing over their present advantage. With it came the port of Charleston, afterwards so useful to them, and which would have been so dangerous to them in the hands of a Federal army.

In a few days, and practically captured at the same hour, came all the States above named except Maryland. They would have obtained that also, and with it what is now West Virginia, and Kentucky and Missouri, if it had not been for yet another and to them an entirely unlooked-for consequence of their victory in Charleston harbor.

It is very difficult now to understand, difficult even to believe, the nature, degree, extent, of the delusions then prevalent at the South concerning the resources and character of the people of the North. Even the nominally educated and intelligent classes shared in these delusions, remarkably. That the population of the free States was utterly unwarlike, and would shrink from the ordeal of actual bloodshed, was so deeply ingrained in the Southern mind that it was impossible, years afterwards, for even official statistics to convince them that the national armies were not mainly composed of hired foreigners.

Mr. Lincoln knew his countrymen better, and his entire

demeanor changed, in his utter confidence as to the response which would be made to the Sumter gun.

Yet he had reasons for proceeding with caution even now.

Clearly perceiving the near and open coming to himself of dictatorial power and responsibility, and feeling that he must at once, but unobtrusively, assume and exercise both, his first action evinced neither alarm nor haste.

The news of the fall of Sumter reached Washington on Sunday morning, April 14, but it was already well known by the President that such news must come and that its arrival was a question of a few hours only. The news of the bombardment had arrived but one day earlier, but its foreordained results did not take him by surprise. The Cabinet had already been summoned, and had assembled to discuss the situation. There is good evidence that Mr. Lincoln had been opposed by the majority of his constitutional advisers, first, in his determination to hold Fort Sumter to the last, and then in his decision to re-provision it. He was now to show them that the result was no more a disappointment to him than to Mr. Jefferson Davis himself. That gentleman, in the month of February, 1861, when on his way to Montgomery to assume the Presidency of the Confederacy, remarked to ex-Chief Justice Sharkey, of Mississippi, "There will be war, long and bloody." In his inaugural address he said, "It is deemed advisable in the present condition of affairs that there should be a well instructed and disciplined army, more numerous than would usually be required on a peace establishment."

How vigorously he and his supporters acted upon their sound convictions is matter of history. They did what they could, but they had thus far been unable to break through the "border-State barrier" maintained against them by Mr. Lincoln's prudence. It had been the only defense he could safely employ until they themselves, by the capture of Fort Sumter, set his hands free. So many things were then living that are now

dead, or live only in other forms, that it is not easy to explain or understand what mere questions of "statute law" and constitutional interpretation had, up to this moment, been felt by Mr. Lincoln as fetters upon his conduct. There was a war upon his hands, but nothing as yet had visibly conferred the war power upon him. Huge "anti-coercion meetings" in the great cities of the North, and the utterances of the most loyal journals, kept him well advised of the prevalent conservatism of public opinion.

Able lawyers openly expressed professional doubts as to whether Mr. Lincoln had any power to call for troops or to make use of them if he should call and get them. He had no constitutional right or authority to raise or appropriate money. The lawyers were almost unanimous in declaring that he must at least await the assembling and action of Congress. It would not do for him to tyrannically usurp anything beyond what was set down in the books and expounded by learned counsel.

Mr. Lincoln was himself a lawyer, but he was something more. He was a statesman and a ruler, born, educated, trained, and prepared for the precise emergency in which he now found himself. He possessed a thorough knowledge of and an unfaltering confidence in a people who would be ready to sustain him in almost any imaginable course of action which should express and accomplish their vehement but altogether intelligent and righteous will.

So complete was Mr. Lincoln's moral and mental preparation that the famous "first proclamation calling for troops" was written by his own hand and was on its way over the country by mail and telegraph before that Sunday was over. It bore date of Monday, the 15th of April, 1861, and is a sort of crystallization in words of the President's exact mind and purpose. It was as follows :

## “PROCLAMATION

*“By the President of the United States.*

“Whereas, The laws of the United States have been for some time past and now are opposed, and the execution thereof obstructed, in the States of South Carolina, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas, by combinations too powerful to be suppressed by the ordinary course of judicial proceedings or by the powers vested in the marshals by law: Now therefore, I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, in virtue of the power in me vested by the Constitution and the laws, have thought fit to call forth, and hereby do call forth, the militia of the several States of the Union, to the aggregate number of seventy-five thousand, in order to suppress said combinations and to cause the laws to be duly executed.

“The details for this object will be immediately communicated to the State authorities through the War Department. I appeal to all loyal citizens to favor, facilitate, and aid this effort to maintain the honor, the integrity, and existence of our National Union and the perpetuity of popular government, and to redress wrongs already long enough endured. I deem it proper to say that the first service assigned to the forces hereby called forth will probably be to repossess the forts, places, and property which have been seized from the Union, and in every event the utmost care will be observed consistently with the objects aforesaid to avoid any devastation, any destruction of or interference with property, or any disturbance of peaceful citizens in any part of the country; and I hereby command the persons composing the combinations aforesaid to disperse and retire peaceably to their respective abodes within twenty days from this date.

“Deeming that the present condition of public affairs presents an extraordinary occasion, I do hereby, in virtue of the



power in me vested by the Constitution, convene both Houses of Congress. Senators and Representatives are therefore summoned to assemble at their respective chambers at twelve o'clock noon on Thursday, the fourth day of July next, then and there to consider and determine such measures as in their wisdom the public safety and interest may seem to demand.

"In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

"Done at the city of Washington, this fifteenth day of April, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-one, and of the independence of the United States the eighty-fifth.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

"By the President,

"WILLIAM H. SEWARD, Secretary of State."

The actual writing of this extraordinary document was done in the few hours which followed the arrival of the news of the fall of Fort Sumter, but it presents no marks of sudden or hasty work. It was the result of thoughtful preparation, and is the condensed expression of deliberate statesmanship.

At that very hour nothing could be more sure than that Virginia and North Carolina would at once join the Confederacy, and that the national capital, with all that it contained, would speedily require armed defenders. That these were ready to come at the call of the President was also instantly known.

The first effect of the Sumter gun was felt in the Cabinet of Mr. Lincoln, which was unified by the same event which made it otherwise possible for him to go forward in utter disregard of legal technicalities. He was at once endowed with all the powers latent in his responsibilities or implied by the necessities of the case; and he was in mind and will fully prepared to employ them.

It was needful for him to assume dictatorial authority, and

the people tacitly expected of him that he should do so. He did it, but did it so strictly in accordance with the plain logic of the situation that neither he nor the popular masses who obeyed him perceived that he had done so. This, too, although the portentous fact of his dictatorship was urged upon them both, from that time forward, by a host of busy tongues and pens, in the press, in legislative bodies, in courts of law, and in the halls of the national Congress.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

## THE GREAT AWAKENING.

A Steady Hand—The Rebellion extending—The Loyal North—The Baltimore Mob—Rebellion in Maryland—Confederate Hopes and Failures—Peril of Washington—Arrival of Troops from the North—The Gateway to the North—Arrival of the New York Seventh—Capture of Baltimore—Case of Col. Robert E. Lee—Secession of Virginia—Call for Three Years' Volunteers—Crushing of Secession in Maryland.

ON the 6th of March, 1861, the Confederate Congress had passed a law for the establishment of "The Army of the Confederate States of America." From that time forward the armed forces of the Rebellion ceased to be "State troops," defending State rights or the boundary lines or the territorial integrities of States.

The proclamation of Mr. Lincoln, therefore, did not at all refer to or deal with commonwealths or communities, or even the doctrine of secession, but with unlawful combinations of individuals banded for an assault upon the national life and the plunder of national property.

While the States of the North, as such, were called upon to furnish their quotas of militia, the same summons was addressed in set terms to such of the border and Southern States as could be reached, and to all "loyal citizens," for it was to the people as a mass that the President looked for support. A feeble cry arose in some quarters that the judiciary should in some manner have been appealed to, but the cumbrous machinery of the courts was set aside by the obvious fact of its insufficiency, and the cries died into silence. There were many who, with greater appearance of sound reason, were eager for an immediate assembling of Congress; but, in Mr. Lincoln's knowledge and perception, a large part of the membership of that body had need of special education through the sure course

of coming events before they could safely be trusted to help or hinder. The wisest heads in either House were probably the least in haste to meet these others in council. The day for their gathering was judiciously and firmly postponed accordingly.

The Executive would certainly require eighty days to cut out for Congress such work as it would need to do when it should assemble.

The proclamation contains but one breath of the suppressed indignation to which Mr. Lincoln had given no utterance during those long and patient days, weeks, months of waiting and endurance. The forces were to be used for purposes set forth "and to redress wrongs already long enough endured."

He could not wisely have then said more; but the words meant a great deal coming from him.

The call for State militia was nominally based upon the Act of 1795, and was promptly responded to by the governors of all the free States. Virginia answered by "seceding" on the 17th of April, in secret session of her State Convention, and in open session on the 22d, adding an empty and yet to Mr. Lincoln's military plans a very useful provision for submitting the question to a popular vote on the 23d of May. North Carolina, Arkansas, and Tennessee rapidly sent back similar replies and cast their fortunes with the Rebellion. The governor of Kentucky returned only a contemptuous refusal to furnish the quota of troops called for by the President, and Maryland almost immediately blazed out into open and dangerous revolt.

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All this was hardly more than had been expected, and caused no pang of disappointment; but the dark and threatening picture had its brighter side. The people of the North had heard the Sumter gun, and its full meaning was interpreted to them by the President's proclamation. Long months of refusal to believe that the Secessionists were in earnest,—months of anxious suspense and benumbing doubt—were terminated fitly

by a few short hours of bewilderment. Sunday passed under that cloud, but on Monday morning, April 15th, the Nation awoke, and accepted the war for the Union with a burst of enthusiastic patriotism which astonished the world. Party lines seemed to melt away in the fierce heat of the sudden excitement. In every nook and corner of the loyal areas, as well as in the larger towns and cities, men flocked together by a common impulse, eagerly offering themselves to defend their country in what to them was its suddenly discovered peril. Mothers gave their sons; wives hastened the steps of their husbands. The recruiting offices were thronged as if by mobs. The very pulpits and prayer-meetings were all on fire with devotion to a cause which at once took upon itself sacredness, as the cause of the whole human race for all time to come, sure to have the blessing of Almighty God. If armed men could have telegraphed themselves to Washington, the city would have been garrisoned instantaneously.

The first visible help arrived on the 18th, in the shape of one hastily gathered regiment of Pennsylvania militia, unarmed and half equipped. They had been hurried off on the spur of the moment, and passed through Baltimore so unexpectedly as to meet no open opposition. The passions whose expression their unarmed ranks barely escaped rose hotly behind them and were only too well prepared for the next-comers.

These were very near. On the morning of the 16th of April the Massachusetts Sixth Regiment mustered upon Boston Common, perfectly equipped for action. It was on the cars for Washington by Wednesday evening, the 17th. It passed through New York on the 18th, marching down Broadway between excited thousands on either hand, and singing as it swung along that strange refrain which had arisen, no one knew whence,—

“ John Brown’s body lies a-mould’ring in the grave,  
His soul goes marching on ! ”

Their passage through the great commercial center of the country gave a sort of rallying-point for the city's loyalty, which was to be intensified the day following by the starting of the New York Seventh Regiment for the beleaguered national capital. Meantime the Massachusetts regiment passed on, and on the morning of the 19th, the anniversary of the battle of Lexington, it entered the city of Baltimore, Maryland. A misunderstanding between the railway officials and the regimental commander resulted in an attempt to convey the troops through the city in the cars they occupied, so dividing their strength and caging them instead of giving them fair play as a solid body.

The Baltimore mob was braver against imprisoned and separated squads than it would have been against a strong column of marching men. A murderous assault was made upon these citizens of Massachusetts, whose only offense, even against a proslavery mob, was the obvious fact of their ready patriotism. No resistance was made by the troops until self-preservation rendered the use of arms compulsory. There was some firing done; a few were killed and more were wounded on both sides; the city police came to the rescue and did their duty admirably, headed by the mayor and the city marshal. The self-control and disciplined good conduct of the troops is emphasized by the fact that the mayor himself, marching at their head, took a rifle from a soldier and shot down one of the rioters whose intemperate zeal was prematurely endangering the deep-laid plot of the conspirators for the secession of Maryland. The subsequent course of both mayor and marshal threw much light upon the disaster sustained that day by the Confederacy at the hands of the over-hasty Baltimore mob.

The regiment made its way through and reached Washington; and the Baltimore gateway to the North was shut behind them: but this was before the men who closed it were at all prepared to keep it so.

Still, they did their very best to repair their error. There had been many public secession-meetings already in Balti-



more and at other places throughout the State. That very evening a monster gathering was held in the city, and the evil spirit of the mob entered into and took possession of the authorities. Even the governor of the State, hitherto regarded as unswervingly "loyal," openly announced his readiness to "bow to the will of the people," and declared that "he would rather lose his right arm than raise it to strike a sister-State," meaning, of course, a rebellious, slave-holding State. The militia of Maryland seemed, therefore, likely indeed to be called out, but not to be put under the command of Abraham Lincoln.

Hardly an hour after the adjournment of the meeting, at midnight of the 19th, secret orders went out, with men for their execution, headed by the Baltimore city marshal, to burn the nearest bridges leading from the free States into Maryland. Before daylight half a dozen of the more important bridges had been destroyed; telegraph-wires were severed; armed patrols were riding hither and thither; the rebel element throughout the State was notified that the hour to strike had come; and the city of Washington was placed in a state of semi-siege between an organized rebellion and a bloodthirsty mob in swift process of organization. Had there been one man among the Maryland rebels fit to lead a battalion, the peril to Washington would have been extreme. They had a surplus of demagogues but no leader.

Such were some of the first-fruits of the proclamation. Precisely similar events, large and small, were occurring in the West and Center, but their recital would add nothing to this illustration of Mr. Lincoln's position, and it required no prophet to predict the nature of those which now must shortly follow.

It did not even require the mind of a statesman or a military leader to understand that promptness and energy on the part of the rebel leaders, coupled with a moderate degree of the unscrupulous daring they had already exhibited, would surely result in the capture of Washington. They had formed the purpose so definitely and indulged the hope so strongly

that the Rebel Secretary of War publicly asserted that the Confederate Stars and Bars would float from the national Capitol before the first of May. He could not have set forth more plainly the fact that the war waged by himself and his associates was essentially a war of aggression and conquest and not at all for the mere defense of imperiled State lines. He did but underrate his ability to move troops to North Carolina and Virginia, forget the only half-seceded position of the latter State, and overestimate the capacity and courage of the Maryland conspirators. The latter, indeed, were frightened and disconcerted unreasonably by the premature explosion of their own mob.

Virginia, still nominally acting as an independent State, responded to the supposed necessities of Maryland by sending on at once two thousand muskets and promising twenty heavy guns. She was urged to this by Mr. Jefferson Davis even before the adoption by the people of her formal act of secession.

In spite of Mr. Lincoln's confidence and courage, and the unflinching patriotism of those around him, these were anxious days in the capital of the Republic. The very office-seekers called for arms and formed temporary military organizations. They encamped in the halls of public buildings, in the legislative chambers at the Capitol, and in the reception-rooms of the Executive Mansion. It is quite possible that the numbers and military efficiency of these brave and willing but entirely undisciplined mobs were happily exaggerated in the minds of the rebel authorities.

Mr. Lincoln went on steadily, unswervingly, with the tremendous work he had on hand. His faith in the patriotism of the loyal people was absolutely unbounded, and he framed all measures accordingly. Every hour that passed saw the vast machinery of the new government he was creating take form and order under his diligent direction, and the preparations made for the days to come were on a plan both broad and deep. Man after man was chosen, appointed, and ordered to duty. The several departments were alive with busy and trustworthy

toilers, while in almost every room of every civic bureau there appeared some ominous token, such as a rifle and a cartridge-box, that its occupant was prepared to defend his right to be there. There was at least no opportunity left for the arising of a pro-slavery mob in Washington, or for the success of any other than a well-led attack by a competent and disciplined force of the public enemy. Mere militia and guerrillas would indeed have been out of the question, but the Confederate leaders must have strangely miscalculated their resources in not being ready to avail themselves of an opportunity so golden.

It was rapidly slipping away from them, never to return. The Eighth Massachusetts Regiment arrived in Philadelphia April 19th, under command of General Butler, and the New York Seventh, under Colonel Lefferts, on the 20th.

These troops were thoroughly drilled and equipped, and quite capable of facing and scattering any mob; but it would have been a foolish deed to waste one life among them in the streets of Baltimore. It would also have been a political and military blunder. Mr. Lincoln was bitterly blamed at the time for "not forcing a passage and teaching the rebels a lesson;" but he had not lost an atom of his calm, wise courage. He knew how much of the current feeling in Baltimore and throughout Maryland was mere excitement and temporary effervescence. He knew it would cool and subside unless something hot and hasty should be done to keep it stirred up. He is said to have "yielded to the urgent request of the governor" that no more troops should be forwarded through Maryland and especially through Baltimore. He did nothing of the kind. He did but follow the dictates of the plainest common-sense and refuse to be influenced by resentment or passion, or by the counsels of angry patriots who were not—as he was—directly responsible for consequences.

The two Union commanders were promptly informed of the bridge-burning and of the fact that another road could be opened to Washington by way of Annapolis and Chesapeake

Bay. They set out at once by different routes, Gen. Butler arriving at Annapolis on the 21st, and Colonel Lefferts on the 22d. As a matter of course they were met by a protest from the governor of Maryland warning them not to land; but the protest had no troops behind it and occasioned no delay in getting the two regiments on shore. The governor also at once addressed a letter to the President, asking that the troops should be promptly removed. He also betrayed his bewildered state of mind by suggesting that the British Minister should be requested to "mediate" between the national government and its rebels in arms.

Through windows like this insane suggestion it is possible to obtain a view of the existing vagueness of ideas, in the minds of even educated men, as to the very first principles of national entity and human government. An answer was sent through the Secretary of State, and the troops were not removed.

The New York Seventh was ordered to Washington, and General Butler remained to keep open the gateway to the North. He made it much wider in a few days. So small was the disposable force at Washington that Mr. Lincoln had few men to spare to hold the road by which the Seventh was to come. There was a serious doubt if the District militia, now sworn in as three-months volunteers, could be depended upon for service outside of the narrow area they supposed themselves sworn to defend. Two companies only, "A" and "B," of the third battalion, the National Rifles and the German company before mentioned, volunteered their services, and those who saw them march away looked upon their undertaking as a sort of "forlorn hope." They did their duty without discovering any danger, and the Seventh arrived in safety on the 25th. The exuberant hopes of the Washington secessionists went down somewhat as those faultless lines of bayonets came glittering down the avenue to pass in review before the President. Still, as before, so then and afterwards, the secessionists were freely permitted to speak treason and write it, and to

come and go unhindered. Nothing else really galled some of them quite so much as this feature of indifference in Mr. Lincoln's policy.

During all this time the rebel flag floated from the roof of Arlington House, the family mansion of General Lee, just across the Potomac, in full view of the city. The proposal of a squad of the District militia to go and take it down was instantly negatived as an unwise irritation of the people of Virginia. The "guard" for the defense of the Long Bridge over the Potomac never numbered more than twenty men at a time, prior to the 25th of April.

On the 20th, with or without good reason, the great navy-yard at Gosport, Virginia, was burned and abandoned by the small national force in charge of it, with all its costly appliances and a number of ships upon which the rebel government had securely counted as the commencement of its "navy." A similar fate had overtaken the United States arsenal at Harper's Ferry, Virginia, on the 18th. In the West a state of affairs existed which imitated remarkably the local chaos at the corresponding points in the East. Everywhere Mr. Lincoln was appealed to by both friends and enemies, and at every point he exhibited the same steadiness, good temper, and sound judgment. It was a task of extraordinary difficulty, and the results obtained bear striking witness of its wise and faithful performance.

The Annapolis route to Washington continued open, nor could there now be any successful effort on the part of the Maryland secessionists to prevent further reinforcements of all sorts from pouring into the city they had so narrowly failed to win. They still retained undisputed control of Baltimore and of the greater part of the State, but were not able to receive further supplies of military material from the South. At the same time, numbers of their most active and dangerous spirits were continually leaving them to seek employment in the army under Jefferson Davis. The State Legislature was in session



at Frederick, but contained just enough of loyal leaven, acting with and upon its "conservative" and timid elements, to induce delay and irresolution in all its action until the hour for successful treason had gone by.

President Lincoln authorized General Butler to suspend the writ of habeas corpus in certain districts, but no strictly military movement was attempted until May 13. Then, under cover of a storm and the approach of night, General Butler, with less than a thousand men, suddenly entered Baltimore, seized a position from which his guns commanded the city, and effected a complete capture of it without the loss of a man. It was a deed the success of which justified its apparently reckless daring.

The "siege of Washington" was raised, the State of Maryland was forever lost to the Confederacy, and its population generally, if slowly, ranged themselves among the assured supporters of the national authority. The possible line of subsequent conflict at once drifted Southward from the banks of the Chesapeake to those of the Potomac, and the entire aspect of affairs changed.

A striking illustration of the difficulty under which Mr. Lincoln began his work and the darkness he was in as to whom he could employ and trust as servants of the new government is afforded by the case of Colonel Robert E. Lee, of the regular army. So complete had been the confidence reposed in this man's honor and patriotism, and so carefully had he abstained from giving any token of disloyalty, that, as late as April 20, he was informally offered the command of the Union forces about to take the field. His response was a resignation of his commission in the army, dated the same day. Three days later he was formally installed as commander of the State forces of Virginia. These were turned over to the "Army of the Confederacy" on the 24th of May, and he with them, to receive at once a commission as full "general" under the Rebel flag. No doubt he acted in accordance with his ideas of his duty to the



State in which he had happened to be born and which was more sacred in his eyes than was the government to which he had sworn allegiance ; but his course throws a lurid light upon the harassing perils of Mr. Lincoln's position. While such lessons of caution as this were daily given and received in the most surprising manner, a wise reticence kept most of them from the immediate knowledge of the nation at large.

The President's proclamation called for State militia, in nominal accordance with laws which were considered by many jurists to be severely strained by the summons. The troops were rapidly coming forward, but the force they would constitute could be but little better than a temporary expedient, as their term of service was but ninety days. The entire attention of the public mind was concentrated upon and absorbed by the several State contingents, and small notice was bestowed upon a much more important exercise of the latent powers of the national executive.

Mr. Lincoln's experience in the Blackhawk War, brief as it was, had taught him a vitally important lesson as to the nature, value, and melting-away tendencies of all such extemporized armies. Neither had he read the history of the Revolutionary War so carefully in his boyhood, without storing his mind with its most important military lessons. Precisely the difficulties which at times so paralyzed the genius of Washington were right before him now, and he prepared for them in advance.

Volunteers were freely offering, all over the North, and it was but ten days after issuing the proclamation, or on April 26, that Mr. Lincoln sent out official notifications through the War Department that a certain number of these, 44,034, would be accepted "for three years or during the war." He had no warrant of law, apparently, for any increase of the regular army or navy, but he had at the same time called for 22,714 "regulars" and 18,000 seamen.

All this was somewhat quietly done ; but the Northern allies of the rebels in arms did not fail to express their opinion of it

openly and very freely. In their eyes, and as expressed by their tongues and pens, it was the unscrupulous deed of a tyrant, a dictator, a would-be autocrat. There was in it, indeed, a good deal of that patriotic autocracy which refused to let the nation lie still and be murdered while thousands of willing hearts were offering strong hands to defend it.

The acceptance of men were by no means rigidly limited to the terms of the first War Office orders, and it was soon safe to say that there would be an army in the field after the militia regiments should serve their time and go home.

After all, one of the most important matters was that nothing should be done too audaciously startling and suggestive of "aggression and invasion."

The incipient rebellion in Maryland was now completely crushed. The dangerous elements were weeded out of the State Legislature, a little, by a few salutary arrests. There was no longer any peril threatening the city of Washington in the rear. Nevertheless, the Confederate flag still flaunted in the face of the national capital from the roof of Arlington House as late as May 23, eighty days after President Lincoln's inauguration. There was nothing except the date of the Virginia election to prevent the planting of a rebel battery in General Lee's front yard. Such a battery would have been within easy range of all the government buildings, and would have commanded the Long Bridge over the Potomac, with all its northern approaches. The range of low elevations on the Virginia shore of the Potomac was evidently calling loudly for occupation. Advices from the South added strength to all considerations based upon military science, but not one step was visibly taken which could appear to threaten, much less to assail, "the rights of a sovereign State," until she should formally divest herself of them. No solitary Virginia voter was afforded a fresh pretext for casting his misguided ballot in favor of the "Ordinance of Secession."

## CHAPTER XXX.

## OVER THE LONG BRIDGE.

Respects for State Rights—Secession of Virginia—Union Advance across the Potomac—Death of Ellsworth—The Beginning in West Virginia—The Old Flag disappears from the South—White House Life—War-time Illusions—Studies of future Battle-grounds—A Funeral in the East Room.

Nothing could well exceed the closeness with which Mr. Lincoln watched the course of events at the South, or the logical sequence of the steps which he took in pursuance of each and every movement made by his adversaries. Up to this last hour, he had neither done nor authorized any proceeding, as to Virginia, which the most fanatical expounder of "State rights" could reasonably call in question.

There was a small guard kept, to be sure, at the Long Bridge over the Potomac, to prevent its very possible destruction, but there was no vexatious interference with travel and traffic or even with the passage of Maryland stray volunteers for the rebel army. More than once, after nightfall, the squad of Union soldiers in charge at that point went hilariously over and hobnobbed with the Virginia State militia similarly posted at the old tavern on the other shore, and were hardly reprimanded by their officers for so doing. Even in the serious matters of the Gosport navy-yard and the Harper's Ferry arsenal, all pains were taken to avoid any open collision with the forces sent by the governor of Virginia for their seizure. Forbearance was carried to the utmost limit of endurance, but there it expired, strictly by limitation.

In accordance with the action of the Virginia State Conven-

tion, the question of the secession of the State was submitted to a popular vote on the 23d of May. Except in what now constitutes the State of West Virginia, no such thing as a fair and free expression of the popular will was possible, for military movements had begun and military domination rendered the so-called "vote" a mere matter of form. There was little use in counting such a preordained collection as were those heaps of ballots.

Nevertheless, although General Lee assumed command of the State troops on the 23d of April, and all men knew the use he would surely make of them, they could not be and were not turned over to the Confederate army, so losing their character as "State" troops, until the 24th of May. The Confederate leaders were therefore yet in some degree hindered by the constitutional and legal technicalities whose spirit and letter had been so much more carefully regarded by Mr. Lincoln.

They were themselves seemingly prompt enough in their operations, so soon as their hands were untied, but they were not at all prepared for the electric suddenness and energy of his final action.

The Virginia Convention's Act of Secession was duly confirmed by the formal election-returns, not yet made up but perfectly well known, at the setting of the sun on May 23, 1861. Within one hour afterwards there were columns of United States troops in motion towards the Northern shore of the Potomac and the Washington end of the Long Bridge. Before midnight a light force of scouts and skirmishers crossed the bridge and began to feel their way down towards Alexandria. This advance consisted of but one company, barely sixty men all told, and all the armed opposition they met or saw was a mere squad of mounted Virginia militia who rode hurriedly away without firing a shot. By two o'clock A.M., the same night, three full regiments had crossed the Potomac at Georgetown, D. C.; four more by the Long Bridge; and one, Ellsworth's Zouaves, had gone directly to Alexandria by steamer,

with one war-vessel as a convoy. By daylight every position aimed at had been occupied without hindrance. The stupid murder of the brave and lamented Ellsworth by a tavern-keeper in Alexandria was merely an expression of individual ferocity, such as afterwards made severe measures necessary at times in dealing with certain elements of the population of the South.

Forty-eight hours later two regiments from General McClellan's command crossed into Western Virginia at Wheeling, to support the Union men who were rising throughout that region to defend themselves against Secession tyranny.

The soldiers of the Union had come to stay, for the first duty imposed upon those who had crossed the Potomac at Washington was the construction of strong earthworks upon the heights commanding the approaches to the city. Even the New York Seventh, the kid-gloved favorites of the great metropolis, were at work with pick and spade on the "sacred soil of Virginia," in the early morning of the day after the old commonwealth surrendered its immunities as such and became a part of the new organism which styled itself the "Confederate States of America."

A similar comparison of dates with acts and occurrences of varied nature and locality would present a similar teaching, but here is quite enough to illustrate clearly the sagacious prevision and careful preparation which were concealed under what was then considered by many "Mr. Lincoln's unaccountable dilatoriness."

He was forbidden the luxury of explaining his plans and purposes to the general public, including the public enemy. His immediate advisers were not talking men, then or afterwards. He was compelled to steer carefully between the continuous perils of over-haste and loss of time. In those all-important first days of the long struggle, while paying no undue regard to legal technicalities of any kind, the twin-perils referred to contained in themselves the necessity that no com-

munity or population should be treated as in rebellion until it had formally become so by its own express act and word.

So far as State Conventions and Legislatures and their supplementary actions were concerned, the work of Secession was now complete. It is worthy of note that on the first day of June, 1861, the flag of the United States floated over only these few spots throughout all the vast territory ruled by President Jefferson Davis: the camps opposite Washington; Fortress Monroe, Virginia; Fort Pickens, Key West, and Garden Key, in the State of Florida. (West Virginia and East Tennessee can hardly be counted as having been at any time or by their own will part and parcel of the Confederacy, and are therefore excepted.) From every other place, fort, navy-yard, arsenal, public building, private house, it had disappeared, and the vast majority of the people of the civilized world believed that it had so disappeared forever. What is sometimes described by politicians as "a good working majority and no more" of the people of the free States were utterly determined that it should one day go back again.

Mr. Lincoln had now been in Washington three full months, and the routine movement of his daily life had become well established. He had not materially changed his personal habits. He was as careless as ever concerning his dress, and retained his free, familiar ways with his nearer friends. His distaste was as strong as ever for mere ceremonial, social formalities, etiquette of rank, outward insignia of place and power. He increased with iron endurance his steady, tireless industry, his patient investigation of all subjects which his duties, present or to come, might bring before him. It was needful that he should not be too easy of access; but if he had business at any bureau of any Department, he was not at all unlikely to attend to it in person. He more than once did so, somewhat to the discomfiture of inattentive subordinates.

He labored under one disadvantage, perhaps, as a ruler. If he met a governor, a general, a foreign diplomat, a visitor of



especial distinction, it was out of his power to look upon the great personage before him as other or more or less than a human being like himself or any other man so to be met and spoken to. Some of the dissatisfaction caused in this way has been duly recorded by the sufferers.

He retained in all its freshness his love for children. If a child was led past him at a public "reception," he was apt to take it up and kiss it and give it a kind word as simply and even a little more eagerly than if he had met the child of some old neighbor on the sidewalk of his own street in Springfield.

The business offices of the Executive Mansion were in the second story, and were but three in number, with ante-rooms for the accommodation of visitors in waiting. One very large room, fronting southward, had been "the President's room" ever since the house was built. Next to this, on the east, was a narrow room in which the Private Secretary performed his double duty of defending the President from needless intrusion and of acting almost as a second President in a host of minor matters. Across the hall was another room of like dimensions, occupied by the two assistant secretaries and such clerical help as was sometimes given them. To this latter room, indeed, Mr. Lincoln sometimes fled for refuge from the pressure he could not escape in his own. Adjoining this was a large sleeping-room, also sometimes temporarily applied to more strictly official uses.

Mr. Lincoln had shown his usual wisdom in selecting the confidential servants of his own office. They were all young men of sufficient capacity and education for their duties, but were without other associations or ambitions than such as bound them to himself. He could and did put utter confidence in them, and there was in the feeling with which they all regarded him something quite as strong as any tie of blood could possibly have been.

Mr. Lincoln's old friend Colonel Ward H. Lamon, and afterwards other officials, had at first somewhat of the external man-

agement of social "state affairs" in the White House, but they were not actual members of Mr. Lincoln's small and unpretending household. Only his family and its guests took their meals in the house.

From the very beginning Mrs. Lincoln assumed and held her rightful position as lady of the mansion; nor was it always easy to designate the precise limit of her authority. It was never in the world easy to do this as to the wife of any private citizen, the lady having a will of her own. An understanding of the fact that neither Mr. nor Mrs. Lincoln for a long time fully grasped the idea that they were no longer "private citizens" furnishes a complete key to the solution of much which then and afterwards excited curious comment.

Much more than most of those around him, Mr. Lincoln had internally formulated his clear comprehension of the intense and stern realities with which he was dealing. Crowds of eager applicants begged and pleaded and all but fought with one another for the offices in his gift. Deputations called upon him to express in various ways the exuberance of their patriotism. Regiment after regiment came marching gayly down Pennsylvania Avenue and passed in glittering review before him with a sort of "picnic and Fourth of July" expression upon their bright and brave young faces. Those about to die saluted him as if he had summoned them to some grand holiday excursion.

Upon one and all he looked sadly, kindly, earnestly, through eyes that were dim with seeing, far beyond their serried ranks and silken flags, the torn and bloody turf, the scattered corpses, the lifting powder-smoke of the inevitable battle-fields to come.

In the large room where he worked through all the days and half through all the nights there was but little furniture. What there was had an old-time and half-faded look, and no great part of it had been added or altered since the days of President Jackson. The marks of the feet of that strong-headed enemy of treason and secession were plainly visible

upon the bricks above the fireplace until these were removed. The favorite chair of the old hero, an easy, oddly shaped affair of Mexican manufacture, was one of the heirlooms of the office from which he had bearded the South Carolina "nullifiers" of his own time.

In one corner of the room was an upright frame of wood, upon which were many maps, conveniently mounted on spring-rollers. To this were afterwards added others of similar pattern. Folios of maps leaned against the walls or hid behind the sofas. Volumes of military history and kindred literature came and went from various libraries and had their days of lying around the room or on the President's table. He was an early riser and was apt to be at his toil before the humblest clerk on the national pay-rolls had eaten his breakfast. That of the Chief Magistrate was very frequently brought to him in his office that he might lose no time, for now, as always, from his log-house cradle, he was a hard student. He knew every river, mountain-range, creek, hill, valley, on the broad areas through which the tides of the war were to ebb and flow. More than that, he made himself better than ever acquainted with the constituent elements of the local populations, their industries, tendencies, origins, wealths or poverties. No man living was endowed with a better capacity to digest, assimilate, and employ the multiform information he sought out so perseveringly. How important all this laborious study was to the nation can only be approximately estimated by means of an attempt to grasp and imagine the possible consequences of its neglect and absence. The ruin, disgrace, misery, which would surely have resulted from ignorance-in-power striving to perform the functions devolved upon Mr. Lincoln, form a picture from which the coldest critic might be glad to turn away.

About one year later, in a private note to General McClellan, Mr. Lincoln was able to say of an order he had given and was defending: "I ordered . . . on the unanimous opinion of every military man I could get an opinion from, and *every*

*modern military book*,—yourself only excepted.” How many hours of intense, absorbed, brain-wearying application are implied in that simple but pregnant sentence!

There was something almost dreamlike and unreal about life in Washington for most men during those first three months of the new government. The very excitement and the tenseness of the strain in which men’s minds were held removed the life they were living so far away from any life which any of them had ever before lived or thought of living.

The hazy atmosphere of semi-tragic unreality pervaded at last even the White House itself. The bright spring weather aided the effect of the increasing glitter of uniforms and flutter of flags and the all but ceaseless flow and crash of martial music from the noisy bands of the arriving regiments.

There had been no battle fought since Fort Sumter was bombarded, and there were not wanting false prophets of peace to chirrup gayly that there would be no actual bloodshed.

Through all this over-strained, unnatural, feverish, misty state of things came suddenly the tramp of the movement across the Potomac on the 24th of May. Virginia threw open her gates by a vote of her people, and the Union troops marched in: but precious blood was spilled upon the threshold.

The shot fired murderously by the Alexandria tavern-keeper struck a mark in the very household of the President. Colonel Ellsworth was but a boy of twenty-four, but he had won the admiration of the entire country by his genius and energy. He had journeyed to Washington with Mr. Lincoln, who had become warmly attached to him, and shortly afterwards appointed him a second-lieutenant in the regular army. The regiment he raised among the firemen of New York, under the call for volunteers, was considered second to none in its promise of usefulness under such a commander. He was a type and personal embodiment of the young manhood which was springing forward at the call of their country’s peril. He

was, as such type and representative, to offer a bloody illustration of the true meaning of the summons.

The Sunday before the eventful day, Ellsworth was at the White House, less as a guest than as a well-loved member of the household. To the same place his body was borne after the murder, and the funeral ceremonies were held in the gaudy "East Room," sadly dressed and draped for the occasion.

That Mr. Lincoln grieved for his bright, genial, gifted young friend; that all the sorrow he expressed for him was real, requires no saying. Nevertheless, to him as to the people generally, the death of Ellsworth marked the end of a worn-out policy and the beginning of a new order of thoughts and feelings.

A splendid regiment of "Ellsworth Avengers," the 44th New York Volunteers, was speedily formed, but the blood upon the Virginia threshold did not call for human vengeance. It did but witness before God and men that the day of compromise, negotiation, dallying, delay, had passed, and that the day of wrath had come,—the day for which Mr. Lincoln had been buying ships and enlisting men without due form and warrant of statute law.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

## THE EUROPEAN QUESTION.

The Secretary of State—England and France—Privateers and Piracy—The New Navy—Whaling Schooners as War Vessels.

MR. LINCOLN's education for the duties he was now performing had been given him through long and painful processes by all of which he had faithfully profited, but his attainments were all in a peculiar manner limited by the boundaries of his own country. He spoke no other than the English tongue. He knew little of other nations beyond a moderate acquaintance with their geography and history and some stray ideas conveyed to him by such representatives as they had sent to America as emigrants. From these latter, indeed, he had learned all they had to teach, and such acquisitions were of value to him now; but all the emigrants had been men and women of "the people."

Of the governing castes and classes of Europe, and of European politics, the cesspool in which kings and their ministers dabbled and fished and groped for the prizes of war and diplomacy, he knew almost nothing and cared but little more.

He could but be aware that the great maritime nations of the Old World were watching with jealous eyes the growth of the new power in the West over which he had been called to rule, but he had great faith in the Atlantic Ocean and the supposable common-sense of European statesmen. So great was this faith of his that it came perilously near to leading him into an error. It would surely have done so but for the simple directness of the doctrine he at once formulated for the government of the foreign policy of the United States.



"This is our own affair," he said, in effect. "It is a family quarrel with which foreign nations have nothing to do, and they must let it alone."

The practical details of the processes by which that doctrine was to be communicated to European powers were left almost altogether to the care of Mr. Seward, the Secretary of State. They could not have been intrusted to a brain more capable or to a heart more utterly worthy of the momentous trust. There was little need for Mr. Lincoln to add the State Department to his other burdens while its management was under such an eye and hand as those of the practised New York statesman. Here, at least, there was something in the nature of complete relief, and the weary ruler accepted it as frankly as it was given. The friendship between him and his "minister of foreign affairs," from the very first, assumed a warm and personal character. The gossips who strove to give it any other significance, then or afterwards, did but testify their incapacity to understand the broad patriotism and generous mutual confidence of these two men.

In training, as in natural gifts, Mr. Seward was as unlike Mr. Lincoln as he well could be; but they had one thing in common and one tie of measureless brotherhood in their unselfish devotion to the performance of the great work which God had laid upon them. If, at first, they were a little slow, Mr. Seward somewhat the slower, in coming to a mutual understanding of each other's character, aim, and purpose, that was all the more surely attained in the course of joint toil and counsel and anxiety. Together, each in his appointed place, they labored in harmony to the end.

It was well known that one of the first acts of Mr. Davis, on assuming the reins of power, had been to dispatch emissaries to the more important courts of Europe, notably to those of England and France. Much preliminary work, of a preparatory kind, had before that time been accomplished by the unofficial agents of the intended rebellion. A strong feeling of

sympathy for the South had been most skillfully created. In Europe, as in America, the "War" had been in progress for months before Mr. Lincoln's inauguration. Up to the close of the Buchanan Administration the cause of the South had been vigorously served abroad, in not a few instances, by the official and accredited representatives of the National Government at Washington.

It was difficult, at first, for foreign diplomacy to find a place for the insertion of an entering wedge of interference. The stern directness of Mr. Lincoln's own policy was shortly to offer one, in such a shape as should present the most tempting bait and with it the most trying problem. As early as the 17th of April, 1861, three days after the surrender of Fort Sumter, Mr. Davis issued a proclamation offering "letters of marque and reprisal," under the seal of the Confederate States, to armed privateers of all nations.

It was truly a tempting offer to the supposable pirates of Europe, but it was rendered somewhat less so, in about forty-eight hours, by the counter-proclamation of President Lincoln. This document contained a deal of salutary warning and had a most beneficial effect. It notified the "privateers" invited by Mr. Davis that they would be "held amenable to the laws of the United States for the prevention and punishment of piracy."

This declaration was in strict accordance with the more recent utterances of the great commercial powers and with the treaties they had mutually entered into. At the same time a rigid blockade was declared of all the ports of the States then included in the Confederacy. Those of Virginia and North Carolina were added in due time.

The most vigorous efforts were made to render the blockade effective. Ships were fitted out and put to sea even more rapidly than regiments on land were raised and equipped. The new navy of the United States was in the active performance of its sudden duties before the first company of skirmishers marched across the Long Bridge.

Of naval affairs, as such, Mr. Lincoln knew but little. He had never been upon salt water nor examined a vessel of war. He had, however, studied with care and acquired an intimate, practical knowledge of the navigation of the great rivers of the West. These latter and their flotilla, present and prospective, were judiciously loosened somewhat from the control of the Navy Department. They remained to the end under the especial care of the man who had himself been a "river-pilot," who had made and managed flatboats, and who had mastered problems of fresh-water navigation which would have been new and strange to the most accomplished seaman in the Atlantic squadron.

There was little difficulty in obtaining the services of all desirable sea-going vessels, owing to the panic created among the commercial classes by the Confederate threat of privateering. Owners were eager to place their ships and steamers under the national flag, whether by sale or charter. There were notable instances of patriotic liberality in this direction, but there were more of a kind hardly so creditable to human nature. These latter may be fairly illustrated by the case of a Connecticut merchant who urged Mr. Lincoln to purchase "for war purposes" a batch of worn-out whaling-schooners. No longer fit to deal with a whale, they were just the thing in which a crew of brave men under government pay could pursue, fight, capture, a fleet of French or English armed steamers under the rebel flag.

Mr. Lincoln preferred to look on the ludicrous side of such incidents as this and a hundred other manifestations of stupid greed which daily came before him. He was genuinely glad to be able to do so. He freely declared, to more than one who conversed with him, that the most important relief to his heavy load of care and anxiety was that which he found in his capacity for enjoying fun for its own sake. He could still tell a story or laugh at a joke, and he could still use either as a weapon or a shield. In any form of employment they per-

formed invaluable uses. Those whose solemn shallowness enables them to disregard the structure of the human mind and brain, or to confound the one with the other, will probably continue to wonder at the trustworthy anecdotes of the President's unaccountable frivolity in those days of overstrain.

The beetle sees a giant laugh while he is lifting a rock, and indignantly remarks to the glow-worm at his side: "The fellow is indecent. You or I would have done it with due solemnity."

## CHAPTER XXXII.

## BULL RUN.

Checker-board Campaign Plans—On to Richmond—The Two Armies—  
Dissolved Militia—Congressional Legislation Under Sudden Pressure  
—The President's Message—Five Hundred Thousand Men.

THE growth and development of the people of the United States up to the outbreak of the Rebellion had been attained through processes peculiarly peaceful. On the first day of June, 1861, it could have been said of them all, both North and South of the Potomac and Ohio rivers, that no one of their characteristics was more distinctly marked than their ignorance of war. The living generation had no memory or knowledge of its effects, and the idea that it might be or that it involved a distinct science had dawned upon but few minds among them.

The next most important fact, politically, was the stone-blindness of the masses to the fact of their own ignorance.

The South believed itself essentially martial, and a great deal had latterly been done to make it so. It was in vastly better condition for warlike purposes than was the North, and the people of the latter section were ignorant of this fact also.

All over the free States the newspaper editors and local orators, great and small, dabbled fiercely in patriotic statesmanship. They united in assuring the President that they had supplied him with "an army," and that he was in duty bound to crush the Rebellion with it. The prevalent idea of army-movements appears to have been borrowed from the black and white squares of a checker-board and their easily transferable "buttons." Substitute the seeded territory for the checker-

board, and the President's obvious business was to win the game at once, while so many eager people were looking on and were waiting impatiently to see him do it.

The cry of "On to Richmond!" now began to rise, with a full-throated volume which threatened to drown the explanatory reply that there were many brave men, with rifles in their hands, standing right in the way.

A badly managed skirmish at Big Bethel, Virginia, on the 10th of June, costing several valuable lives, did but whet the popular appetite for military activity. Little affairs of even less bloodshed, but with more important results, took place in West Virginia. The "battle of Boonville," Missouri, was faintly fought and fled from by the Rebel militia on the 17th of June, and it was urged that the Confederate forces between Washington and Richmond would scatter as promptly as their Western brethren, if advanced upon in a similar manner.

Mr. Lincoln did not share in this delusion, but both he and his military counselors were aware that there were positions of great strategic importance which might well be seized and occupied, with a view to further operations. The most important of these, as was afterwards proved, was the one upon which the first movement was planned by the generals on both sides.

Manassas Junction was the point where the railroad from Alexandria, on the Potomac, met the railway connecting the rest of Virginia with the Shenandoah Valley. It had been feebly occupied by the State militia of Virginia, even before the secession of that commonwealth, and it was made a rallying-point for subsequent levies. About the first of June, 1861, General Beauregard, of the Confederate army, was sent to take command of the forces assembled for the protection of the Manassas lines. These were, therefore, the first obstruction in the way of any direct movement "on to Richmond."

The Union troops were mainly composed of State militia, and these were all "three-months men." They included all the



well-drilled and disciplined regiments, for the "regulars" were few indeed, and the volunteers were yet hardly fit for use as soldiers. The State-militia term of service was a most important factor in Mr. Lincoln's military calculations. It was so much so, that their melting away by reason of its expiration began before a blow could be struck. On the very eve of the battle of Bull Run, the Fourth Pennsylvania Regiment and Varian's Battery of (New York) Light Artillery were dismissed and marched away from the field of battle because their time had run out. Others, similarly circumstanced, remained, and took their share of the work in hand.

The forward movement called for by the country, and perhaps by military as well as political necessity, was ordered, and was made under General McDowell. With a dissolving army of less than twenty-eight thousand men and forty-nine guns, he fought an army of the best soldiers in the Confederacy, thirty-two thousand strong, with fifty-seven guns. Actual fighting began on the 18th of July, and it continued, with varied fluctuations, but with general good conduct of both officers and men on both sides, until the so-called "panic" of the Union troops. This took place on the afternoon of the 21st. By that time a large part of the Rebel forces had been so severely handled that they were under a strong impression that they had been defeated. They were only a little less disorganized for military purposes than were their tired-out and routed antagonists. It afterwards required some investigation to assure the Confederate commanders of their victory. Even when satisfied of the fact, they were in no condition to follow it up. The losses on both sides, officially reported, were: United States—25 guns, 481 men killed, 1011 wounded, 1460 prisoners sent to Richmond, including many wounded; Confederates—387 men killed, 1582 wounded, and a few prisoners.

It was a hard-fought action, and the "panic" was simply the disintegration of a number of regiments of raw troops, worn

out with fatigue from marching, fighting, hunger, thirst, extremely hot weather, and intense excitement. There was quite enough of the Union army left in good form, when all was over, to have checked any forward movement on the part of what was also left in good order of the forces it had been fighting with. The Confederate commanders were men of sense and were contented with reaping the harvest left in their possession in such a manner.

They did well; but the entire South went crazy with exultation, after a fashion which, as its rulers afterwards openly stated, sadly interfered with all current plans and operations.

Southern contempt for all men and things north of "Mason and Dixon's line" received a sudden and enormous inflation, and the impression went abroad that "the Yankees" would never presume to face "the Chivalry" again.

Washington city, for a number of days, was thronged with a mob of fugitive members of the shattered regiments. Every man of them had a fearful tale to tell and was anxious to get something to eat. To all appearance the cause of the Union had received a severe blow. There had been an undeniable defeat and what to some critics looked like a throwing away of men and guns and military prestige. The disaster was in appearance mainly, however, and Mr. Lincoln so understood it.

The army beaten at Bull Run was, for its greater part, an improvised force, on the eve of disbandment. If it had there won never so complete a victory, it could hardly have been held together long enough to reap any other fruit thereof than the occupation of important positions. The majority of its personal membership, stung by the memory of their disaster and as brave as ever, were only the more eager to rush into the permanent organizations of "three-years men." No victory could have done half so much towards suddenly converting them into steady and trusty veterans. The gain right here all but counterbalanced the seeming loss. At the North, through every State, county, town, village, homestead, the effect was

instantaneous and most salutary. The editors were given something new to write about for a while, and the men of action poured in steadier, more angrily determined streams towards the Federal recruiting offices. The whole people were taught, as it were in one day, much of the real nature of the gage of battle they had accepted, and they did not flinch for a moment from the grisly truth so presented to them.

To Mr. Lincoln himself, as a ruler, the fate of the militia army brought a tremendous justification of the steps he had taken for the increase of the regular army and navy and for the almost unlimited enlistment of volunteers. Congress had assembled on the 4th of July, in a most liberal and patriotic state of mind, with the exception of a mere squad of timid temporizers and another of open sympathizers with Secession. Nevertheless there had been much criticism of the Administration in both branches of the legislative body, with some loud-toned "On to Richmond" oratory, and also a general industry in obtaining the appointment of constituents to office which had interfered sadly with the performance of strictly legislative functions. Very few men, in either House or Senate, had yet discovered the fact that Mr. Lincoln was, and for some busy months had been, the Dictator of a Republic struggling for its very life. It did not fully dawn upon them until the day when they suddenly awoke to the conviction that they themselves eagerly desired him to be so and were ready to put into his hands all the dictatorial powers they knew how to give him, and then hasten home.

The message the President sent to Congress upon its assembling was a remarkable document. It began with a condensed historical sketch of the rise of the Rebellion and of its progress to that date. It carefully summed up and presented the great fact, so carefully left unshaken by his own course from the beginning, that the Rebels and not the National Government had forced upon the country the one distinct issue, "immediate dissolution or blood." It showed that they had followed this

forcing by practical dissolution, so far as that was in their power, and by drawing the first blood themselves.

This issue, so presented, the message then contended, was not all which was at stake in the conflict thus ruthlessly precipitated. It said: "And this issue embraces more than the fate of these United States. It presents to the whole family of man the question whether a constitutional republic or democracy,—a government of the people by the same people,—can or cannot maintain its territorial integrity against its own domestic foes. It presents the question whether discontented individuals, too few in number to control administration according to organic law in any case, can always, upon the pretenses made in this case, or on any other pretenses, or arbitrarily without any pretense, break up their government, and thus put an end to free government upon the earth. It forces us to ask, 'Is there in all republics this inherent and fatal weakness?' 'Must a government, of necessity, be too strong for the liberties of its own people or too weak to maintain its own existence?'"

These questions presented the precise view of the case held by European statesmen, and they had often and openly declared their belief that, whenever such a question should be asked by the logic of actual events, the answer would be given in the affirmative and the republic or democracy involved would at once go to pieces. As to the American Republic, the issue was now plainly set before the whole world by the man who was more serenely confident than almost any other that such answer would be given as should assure all future thinkers of the stability of all free governments, provided these were bravely maintained by the men in charge of them.

Mr. Lincoln's message dealt briefly but sharply with certain absurd ideas of possible "neutrality" which were employed at the time in Kentucky as a convenient cloak for cowardice and treason. He defended his course in the arbitrary suspension of the writ of habeas corpus. He then advised that Congress,

in the hope of making the war a short one, should place at the disposal of the government four hundred thousand men and four hundred millions of dollars.

These were large figures, and they almost took away the breath of some who heard them ; but the members of the body to whom the message was addressed had been doing the requisite amount of thinking, during the eighty days which had passed since the President's proclamation summoned them together. They did what they would surely not have done if they had been gathered too hastily. They voted half a million of men and five hundred millions of dollars, in a burst of eager patriotism.

Even Mr. Lincoln had almost a hope, at first, that this might prove sufficient. It might well have been so if the half million of men had at that hour been soldiers, and if these had been under officers, great and small, such as the course of the war, with Mr. Lincoln's watchful help, afterwards selected from among the long list of then untried, unknown, altogether undiscovered and undeveloped heroes.

The message concluded with an exhaustive analysis of the stupidities and absurdities of the old doctrine of "State rights" as now applied to the war purposes of the Rebellion. Such an argument was timely, both for home and foreign reading. It was intended for both, as was also much of the earlier matter of the message.

Congress passed the necessary acts to legalize whatever Mr. Lincoln had seen fit to do. Its leadership was in the hands of strong, hard-headed, resolute men, fresh from hearing the voices of their angry constituents, male and female, and not a little very martial music of other descriptions. The protests of the disloyal members were loud and bitter, but small attention was paid them. The minority vote against the measures sustaining the government contained the names of several men who afterwards accepted commissions in the Rebel army, and of one, Vallandigham of Ohio, who was afterwards contemptu-

ously sent across the lines into the Confederacy, "because he belonged there."

Into such a body as this Congress, busily engaged in so good a work and in the discussion of its details, the news of the defeat at Bull Run fell like a bursting bombshell. It was an explosion which put an end to useless debate and blew to atoms the last vestige of hesitation as to the necessities of the case. All remaining business was finished in exactly two weeks, furnishing perhaps the most remarkable instance on record of legislation condensed under pressure. Congress adjourned and went home, leaving Mr. Lincoln at Washington as sole dictator, endowed for the first time with full forms of law for the carrying on of the war.



## CHAPTER XXXIII.

## THE BLOCKADE.

Recognition—Accepting the Situation—The Neutrality Mask—Rejected Information—War Correspondence not History—The Fetters of Etiquette not Worn.

MR. LINCOLN carefully abstained from coming into open collision with any State government acting as such. In public and in private he recognized the assailants of the national integrity only as criminal individuals. He treated the Confederacy simply as the same men acting together in an organized body for the same essentially criminal purposes. He insisted that, as no power existed anywhere for the dissolution of the Union without the assent of all concerned or a majority of them, it had not been dissolved. A different view was conveniently taken for political purposes on the other side of the Atlantic. England and France did not even wait for the complete formation of the Confederacy before they made haste to recognize it as a "belligerent" and to treat it as in some sort one of the nations of the earth. "The South," as they commonly called it, had yet no navy, but its admirers hoped and believed that the deficiency would soon be supplied.

The North, they were yet more sure, was unable to send to sea a fleet capable of coping with any one of their cruising squadrons. It had neither ships nor money nor credit, and it was so far disorganized that it was not likely to obtain either at an early day. It was to their minds merely a question of time, indeed, into how many fragments, of what shapes, the offensive republic should fall.

The motion towards recognition was met by a prompt and

vigorous protest. The attitude and purpose of the United States, expressed through the courageous and skillful diplomacy of Mr. Seward, induced the most precious hesitation abroad as to what precise step in favor of the South had better next be taken.

One of Mr. Lincoln's first and most difficult duties, after declaring a blockade of Southern ports, had been to deprive foreign nations of all pretext for denying its practical efficiency. A mere "paper blockade" would have invited certain ruin, and so one was enforced which was quickly found to stand the most expensive tests. The work of shutting up the blockaded ports was performed by a navy of hastily gathered and somewhat miscellaneous material, but one that proved amply efficient.

Finding that the Union cruisers were vigilant and numerous, and that the blockade could neither be avoided nor denied, the powers most directly interested were compelled to meet the question whether they should forcibly break through or surrender all hope of getting regular supplies of Southern cotton till the end of the war.

They at first very nearly reached the conclusion to break the blockade by force, deliberately calculating that the United States, already struggling under terrible difficulties, would at once be cowed by the prospect of a war with England and France and the open addition of their powers to those of the Confederacy. They were not at all acquainted with Mr. Lincoln, and but slightly so with the great people who sustained him. Both had been sadly misrepresented to them by interested parties.

Nothing could well be plainer to the mind of the President than that the United States had little to lose and everything to gain by braving the worst at once. Cowardice was the road to sure and swift destruction. The only hope was in utterly unflinching courage. Our commerce was already fast disappearing from the seas, and there was every reason to believe that

in any event it would shortly vanish altogether. It did so vanish, strictly in accordance with this expectation. In more than twenty years following the issue of Mr. Davis's privateering proclamation it has not recovered the ground it that day began to lose. So perceiving and so expecting, Mr. Lincoln declared in good set terms that if France and England should so determine on their own behalf, their commerce also should follow into disaster that which we were inevitably losing. They were to estimate for themselves the relative values of their general commerce, on the one hand, and the prospective cotton-crops and friendship of the Confederacy, on the other.

For several months the two powers looked the problem in the face without coming to any definite conclusion. The form in which it was laid before them from time to time can best be understood by quotations from the written instructions given by Mr. Seward to Mr. Charles Francis Adams on the latter's departure to his duties as Minister to England.

"If, as the President does not at all apprehend, you shall find Her Majesty's government tolerating the application of the so-called seceding States or wavering about it, you will not leave them to suppose for a moment that they can grant that application and remain the friends of the United States. You may even assure them promptly, in that case, that if they determine to recognize, they may at the same time prepare to enter into an alliance with the enemies of this republic."

There was more to the same effect; and a similar message was carried to France. It was by no means kindly received by either power, but its expression of unflinching determination prevented the threatened disaster.

Through the following three months the two governments beyond seas continued to wrestle with the difficulty before them.

There, along the whole Confederate seaboard, was still the effective blockade, and behind it lay stores of cotton with endless crops yet to come, and with a young nation ready to raise

them and sell them and at the same time forever to divide and cripple the growing and dangerous power of the United States. Here, all the while before their eyes, was the stern alternative presented by Mr. Seward.

They decided that they would not exactly "recognize" and so at once bring on hostilities. The government of Great Britain first discovered a sort of solution. It sought to dodge, beg, and circumvent the entire difficulty by solemnly declaring itself "neutral" between two morally equal and belligerent parties, into which it assumed the American Republic to be divided.

There was something painfully ludicrous about such a position, but for the tremendous consequences immediately threatened by it and the miseries and wastes which were actually resultant. The manner in which it was received at Washington reads now singularly like a bit of dry, grim humor, officially perpetrated by Mr. Seward at Mr. Lincoln's suggestion.

On the 15th of June the representatives of England and France at Washington asked Mr. Seward for the privilege of reading to him officially certain fresh instructions sent to them by their respective governments. Mr. Seward politely declined to listen until he should first "unofficially" have read the proffered papers by himself that he might know what they were. He was permitted to examine the suspicious instructions, therefore, privately. Having done so, and having consulted Mr. Lincoln, he refused to know or to be "officially" informed what there was in them. He was two men for that occasion, and Mr. Seward was too wise to let the Secretary of State take official notice of documents which formally set forth the entire doctrine of "neutrality." Fresh instructions, however, were at once forwarded to Mr. Adams and our other representatives abroad.

As a result of this mingling of prudence and firmness, Rebel sympathy in Europe was left with no other way of expressing itself but to arm and send out the *Alabama* and like piratical

craft, and to build swift steamers in which to "run the blockade" of the Southern Atlantic seaports. The general disposition to do these things received a tremendous impulse from the battle of Bull Run.

The true character of this engagement was wildly travestied for foreign consumption by an English "war-correspondent" by the name of Russell, who saw none of the hard fighting and a good deal of the disorganized militia whose mob of fugitives interfered with his own panic-stricken race from the supposed approach of danger. It is a curious fact that to this day the accounts written by such men on the spur of the moment, in great excitement, without any possible means of obtaining correct information, are accepted widely as "history," while the contrary statements of commanding generals and other competent authorities, *on both sides*, are unread or disbelieved.

Conferences between Mr. Seward and Mr. Lincoln were almost of daily occurrence, and the iron hand discernible in the conduct of our foreign affairs was not solely that of the shrewd and able head of the State Department. These conferences were generally held at the White House, to and from which Mr. Seward went and came with the easy familiarity of a household intimate rather than with any observance of useless etiquette. It was not at all uncommon, however, for Mr. Lincoln to walk over to the State Department, in the daytime, or to Mr. Seward's house, in the evening, with or without an attending private secretary to carry papers. On the whole, he generally preferred to go alone, as he would have done formerly in the transaction of private business at Springfield. It was the business itself, and that only, with which he burdened his mind. It is to be doubted if either he or Mr. Seward ever wasted a thought upon their purely personal methods of doing their work.

Then and afterwards a similar freedom marked the intercourse of the President with the other members of his Cabinet.

and yet a close observer would not have failed to perceive such differences, finely but unconsciously graded and marked, as each man's personal character and uses indicated or demanded.



## CHAPTER XXXIV.

## WORK WITH RAW MATERIALS.

The New Army—Hunting for Brigadiers—Finances—Preparations of the South—Old Guns and New—Presidential Target-Practice—Selection of General McClellan.

WHEN Congress adjourned on the 6th of August, 1861, there was a strong feeling in the minds of its membership, and throughout the country among all men, that to "the Government," meaning by that word, very distinctly, Abraham Lincoln, the President, had been given all that it or he could ask for, and that the war ought, in all reason, to be made a short one.

A great deal had been given, truly. Every day that passed saw some fresh regiment of enthusiastic volunteers marching, with more or less of regularity in their lines, through the streets of Washington, or into one of the several designated camps of the West and Center. Five hundred thousand men had been voted, and five hundred millions of money. That was a great deal. Men enough to overrun the whole Confederacy, and money enough to pay their expenses. Great things were expected of the President, but no other man living knew so well as he did the marvelous differences between the good "voting" done by the national legislature and the long results of it which had been left for him to realize.

Up to the date of the passage of the Act by which Mr. Lincoln was authorized to accept the services of volunteers, about three hundred thousand men had offered themselves and had been, for the greater part, promptly accepted. They had also been put into training, as efficiently as might be, in such a

famine of military teachers, for the purpose of turning them into soldiers. Quite a large force was already in actual service, but the new law was nevertheless a good thing to have and work under, and the business of recruiting new regiments went forward with great energy.

The organization of such an army presented difficult problems in abundance; but these were met and seized and solved with a sagacity and patience which appears more wonderful as the years go by. The very organic structure of the country, politically, created peculiar features of the situation, and these were not altogether detrimental. The appointments to offices of every grade in the regular army, in all its branches, were in the sole control of the President. It was not so with the volunteers, for these, in a curiously complex way, were still regarded as "State troops," although in the national service. Their regiments were named and numbered as of the several States wherein they were recruited, and all their regimental officers were chosen and commissioned under the laws of the same States. Mr. Lincoln could not appoint so much as a second-lieutenant in a regiment of volunteer infantry. There is one instance recorded of a cavalry regiment from New York reduced to one half its original strength and having lost all its commissioned officers in one way and another, until it was in command of the orderly sergeant of one of its companies. It was necessary to apply to the Governor of New York for a commission for that sergeant as a second-lieutenant, and he passed the succeeding grades to that of major in a few weeks from the date of his first promotion. With the grade of "colonel" the State appointing power terminated and that of the Commander-in-Chief began. With it also began the all but insurmountable difficulties in the way of making even reasonably good selections of "general officers." Much could be done by the employment of graduates of the West Point military school, reappearing now from their long retirements in civil occupations. The regular army itself furnished much good material,

of which such liberal use was made as to interfere seriously with the efficiency of that important arm of the service. The records of the Mexican War were searched to find the names of men who had shown themselves capable of good service. The result may be somewhat illustrated by the career of a well-known officer, a graduate of West Point and of the Mexican War, who marched down Broadway as a volunteer private in a New York regiment, and in a marvelously short time, with small help of his own, save merit, found himself a major-general, in command of a division in the West.

It was a matter of course that the pressure for "general" appointments should be tremendous. Politicians of all parties were anxious for the glory of stars upon their shoulders, with little reference to their personal qualifications for the command of men on a field of battle. Such men actually gathered and carried or forwarded to Mr. Lincoln written "recommendations" for their appointment as brigadiers, in precisely the same manner and of the same kind as if they had been applying for clerkships in the Treasury.

Until the chaos could be reduced to something approaching order, all these papers were kept by Mr. Lincoln in his own office; but they were afterwards transferred to their proper pigeon-holes in the War Department.

The most serious consideration in the appointment or employment of generals arose from the fact that there was yet almost no possibility of knowing who would and who would not prove able to perform well the work so given. Much was necessarily left to the appointing power of events and to the sure selections of actual service; but the untried capacities of all commanding officers gave Mr. Lincoln a most anxious reason for hesitation in risking important military operations at too early a day. There were other reasons for the delays which so severely exercised the pens of the newspaper critics of the Administration.

The details of the processes to be employed in converting

the Congressional grant of "power to raise money" into some specific shape available for the payment of salaries and the purchase of war materials were in the capable hands of Mr. Salmon P. Chase, Secretary of the Treasury. The methods proposed by him were such as, on the whole, secured the warm approval and hearty co-operation of the President. The leading financiers of the great Northern cities were very prompt in reaching a comprehensive view of the situation. At an early meeting of the New York bankers certain timid suggestions as to the future value of government bonds were met by an energetic capitalist with the caustic warning: "If you let the government go down, your other securities won't be worth much to speak of. We must let the President have the last cent." The Treasury and its payments became, in a short time, very much an affair of skillful engraving and rapid printing. A similar process was at the same time carried forward, as rapidly but not so skillfully, at the South.

The Confederate Congress had voted its President also a nearly unlimited army, and he was fast assembling it. He had a very good start of Mr. Lincoln, as to time at least, in all preparation and equipment. Some advantages had also been provided for him by Mr. Floyd, President Buchanan's Secretary of War, in transferring quantities of arms from United States arsenals at the North to similar places of deposit within what were now the Confederate army lines. Purchases of war materials at the North and in Europe had been pushed with industry and success until the Southern ports were closed by the blockade and armed forces were stationed at all the points where highways and railroads crossed the boundaries of seceded territory. In every Southern State the work of organizing and drilling soldiers had been pushed with feverish energy for months before Mr. Lincoln was inaugurated. He knew very well how great a disadvantage his raw levies would be under in any collision with better disciplined troops.

The obtaining of men and officers, the turning of these into

soldiers and leaders, constituted one vast tribulation: but it was only a part of the problem that embarrassed Mr. Lincoln. The entire country did not contain enough of serviceable muskets, all patterns counted, to put one in the hands of each man already enlisted. There were not sabers or carbines or pistols for the cavalry; nor guns or caissons or ammunition or suitable harness for the artillery; neither were there wagons for the quartermaster's service and commissariat, or horses yet collected to haul them or to mount the cavalry. Tents were scarce. Clothing was so difficult to obtain that even when the following winter came the system for its full supply had not yet been perfected. The entire machinery and multifarious appliances of a brand-new military establishment in camp and field had to be developed from raw materials, and to this task Mr. Lincoln gave his very life.

There was in the upper circles of the ordnance service of the regular army an all but invincible conservatism. It took the form, especially, of a strange prejudice against the adoption of any new invention in the way of arms and equipments. At the same time there was a sweeping epidemic of invention among all the ingenious patriots of the nation. Many, indeed, who were not at all ingenious, but desired to make a little money, caught it also.

Between these two opposing forces Mr. Lincoln was compelled to establish some kind of equilibrium. The manufacture of improved arms went forward with good rapidity and with a constant effort towards the attainment of uniformity. Government agents in Europe made purchases of such materials as they could find. They found a great deal that they did not purchase, indeed; and every batch of murderous antiquities rejected by an United States inspecting officer was sure to be at once shipped to America on speculative account, to be urged upon the War Department. There was much "political influence" brought to bear on behalf of those curious collections of condemned weapons. Mr. Lincoln was more than once

compelled to laugh, indignantly, over the effrontery of men who brought to his own office actual specimens of so-called "rifles," to be offered him by the thousand at high prices, the specimen itself, in more cases than one, being an unfirable tool which would have disgraced a curiosity-shop.

Other matters, even more curious, were constantly urged upon him: wonderful new forms of cannon; coffee-mill guns; breastplates and cuirasses, of steel or of complex "padding," which would have been fine loads for men on a forced march in summer; new pistols, good and bad, and bayonets of many patterns, and devilish contrivances which even the inventor found difficulty in explaining the possible use of.

Mr. Lincoln patiently examined whatever was brought to him. He took an especial interest in improved rifles. He at once accepted the idea, which the old army men rejected, that the breech-loading rifle was the weapon sure of universal adoption in the near future; and whenever one was shown him that seemed to promise well, he did his best to give it a personal trial. On the wide space of open ground between the White House and the Potomac, in the latter months of 1861, there stood a huge pile of old lumber, nobody knew whence or why. It was just the thing upon which to set up a target; and there, in the very early morning, the President of the United States might have been seen, accompanied by one of his private secretaries, diligently firing away with the last new invention, and forming his own opinions of its prospective usefulness. He came as near as was possible to being arrested there, one morning, for using fire-arms within the city limits contrary to existing military regulations. He was in the act of stooping on one knee for a very careful aim, when a "corporal of the guard" with a squad of men came running down upon him to make the seizure called for by their orders. A chorus of angry shouts dropped suddenly into silence, however, and the whole squad turned and ran away faster than they came when the stooping culprit stood erect and they had a good



look into the smiling face of the President. His only remark was :

“Well, they might have staid and seen the shooting.”

This, truly, was not very good, considered as marksmanship, for Mr. Lincoln had never acquired accuracy in that accomplishment, even among the Indiana backwoods.

After the gathering of armies, the appointment of a small army of generals, and the creation of a war organism, one more question lay heavy on the heart and brain of Mr. Lincoln. It was one he was to carry for a long time, for it related to the discovery of a great commander. Immediately after the battle of Bull Run it was necessary to relieve General McDowell—under whose nominal leadership and in spite of whose ability and good conduct that well-fought battle had been thrown away—of the command of the forces defending Washington. He was succeeded, under the advice of Lieutenant-General Winfield Scott, by Major-General George B. McClellan, an accomplished officer, favorably known as a military scholar and writer, and also, to the country generally, by reason of the successes achieved by the troops under his command in West Virginia, which were then attributed to his generalship. That they occurred without his especial complicity and almost without his knowledge was not accurately ascertained until a later day.

General McClellan, in the beginning, was a great and welcome relief to Mr. Lincoln, and his services were appreciated to the uttermost. He was young, ambitious, overflowing with bodily vigor and high spirits, and he was thoroughly equipped with the technical knowledge and skill required for the present emergency. It is entirely safe to say that a better selection could not have been made at the time, since the chosen general possessed a peculiar genius for organization. That his genius as a military commander went but little beyond the range of faculties so to be now employed was not discovered until a different set of circumstances called upon him for the

exercise of powers of whose very absence he was sincerely ignorant.

On the resignation and retirement of General Scott, in the following November, General McClellan, as the then senior major-general of the army, was advanced to the chief command. It was his serious misfortune that with his advancement he accepted and retained a vague idea that the President, a mere civil and elective functionary, had somehow ceased to be his military superior and actual commander-in-chief.

Through all the trials and changes which followed, it is well to say here, Mr. Lincoln never materially modified his original estimate of General McClellan and much regretted his inability to add to it. Just before the final act of removing him from command, he at last remarked to a member of his personal staff:

“For organizing an army, for preparing an army for the field, for fighting a defensive campaign, I will back General McClellan against any general of modern times. I don't know but of ancient times, either. But I begin to believe that he will never get ready to go forward!”

It was said with somewhat of sadness but with more than ordinary emphasis, for it implied that the forward movement was of more importance, in the eyes of Mr. Lincoln, than were the personal fortunes of any one commander. That was a point overlooked by many people, both then and afterwards.

McClellan assumed command on July 27, 1861. The work of equipping the army and navy went steadily forward. The Southern statesmen and generals toiled at their similar task on the other side of the now rigidly tightening army lines. Mr. Lincoln saw more and more clearly the magnitude of the struggle before him, while hourly the people began to clamor more loudly for the battles and victories which were not ready and did not come.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

## NEW NATIONAL LIFE.

A Shattered Idol—A New State—Contraband of War—Transitions and Processes—Lincoln a Dictator—The Law of Revolution.

It is not altogether easy at this day to understand how deeply ingrained in the minds of the American people was once the idea of the legality of human slavery. Only a small percentage of even the men who cast their votes for Abraham Lincoln, in 1860, were thorough-going enemies of slavery for its own sake, or were at all entitled or willing to be classed as "Abolitionists." If, however, those who hated the institution were few at the beginning, every day of the continuance of the war added to their numbers. Every drop of good blood wasted by the slaveholders' rebellion intensified the horror with which human bondage fast grew to be regarded. Nevertheless, the great majority of the people yet required a prolonged and severe course of instruction and of mental and moral awakening to prepare them for the final breaking of the old-time idol.

Mr. Lincoln knew very well that slavery must perish. He had so declared in public and in private. He was fully convinced, from the first, that the downfall of the Rebellion must carry with it the destruction of the one cause and object of the Rebellion, but his own hands were for the moment tied. He was fettered by the opinions and prejudices of the very people upon whom he was calling and depending for men and money. He was fettered by the prevailing sentiment of the army itself and by that of many of its best commanders. He was fettered by the unforfeited legal rights of slaveholders in

the District of Columbia, Maryland, Delaware, Kentucky, Missouri, and that part of Virginia known as West Virginia, which had loyally repudiated the "ordinance of secession" on the 23d of May.

In this latter area, indeed, an important political action had followed. The Union men in about forty counties, between the Allegheny Mountains and the Ohio River, strengthened by the presence of Northern troops and by their first successes in arms, held a convention of delegates at Wheeling, as early as June 11, 1861. They provided speedily for a new State government, and the Legislature gathered under the direction of the convention met at Wheeling, on the first day of July, to declare its adhesion to the Union and to elect two Senators of the United States. These latter were sworn in as members of the Senate on the 13th of July, but it was not until two years later that the new State of West Virginia was admitted into the Union as a separate commonwealth.

Mr. Lincoln was dealing with a subject of which he had made a life-long study. He was hourly studying it now, and clearly perceived the delicate and dangerous nature of the situation. The deeply rooted prejudices of millions were not to be trifled with. Time must be given for changes to take place, and these would be made at great cost of blood and treasure and untold suffering; but the price so to be paid for them was unavoidable.

Nevertheless, at the very threshold of the war, Mr. Lincoln was compelled to meet and deal with the African-American slave, in actual, personal presence. Eager, hopeful, jubilant, the colored men and women, by day and by night, came marching into every camp on the long border. They brought their children with them when they could, and their continual arrival seemed to shout in the ears of the troubled ruler, whom they already regarded as a divinely appointed deliverer:

"Here we are! What are you going to do with us?"

The whole country heard it, more or less distinctly, and

floods of conflicting counsels as to the matter and manner of the answer poured in upon the President.

There were men among his newly appointed generals who were ready and willing to answer it for him as to the areas under their direction, oblivious of the need of uniformity in the policy to be pursued and of some other important considerations.

Decidedly the best solution of the difficulty was offered by General B. F. Butler, himself a former pro-slavery Democrat. Accepting in its fullness the idea that slaves were not human beings but mere personal property, they were also "property used for military purposes," of many kinds, and so, when captured or found, were "contraband of war," as much as a loaded musket or a quartermaster's wagon. They could not be sent back to strengthen the military hands of the enemy, and few "Contrabands" were returned to their owners after the slightly grotesque idea became well lodged in the minds of the army and its officers. The practice in this respect varied much for a while, but a fair degree of uniformity came at last in the sure course of human events. All Mr. Lincoln could do was to prevent pernicious haste, and this he managed to accomplish. His precise action in the most important case arising, that of Frémont in Missouri, was complicated with other considerations, and must be treated in another place. There is, however, something not a little absurd in the idea entertained and advocated by many: that for a number of months, at and about this time, Mr. Lincoln ceased to be the earnest foe of slavery he so long had been, and that he was afterwards happily reconverted in time to write and issue the proclamation of emancipation, in 1863. He underwent no such falling away, and he required no such subsequent change of heart and purpose. In order to perceive the entire consistency of his course it is but necessary to form an approximately correct idea of the condition of our national affairs and of his relations to them in the remaining months of the year 1861 and during 1862.

The country was semi-chaotic in all its conditions, foreign relations and domestic affairs alike, political, moral, financial, and industrial. A revolution had arrived and was progressing which affected every citizen in all his relations in life, and the very excitement men were under prevented all but a very few from perceiving, studying, or comprehending the changes they were passing through. There is a sense in which Mr. Lincoln was an embodiment and expression of these changes. He also was developing, learning, advancing, and it is enough for his greatness that he was at all points and continually so much more advanced than other men, and so much better informed, that he was able to lead them wisely and not into ruin.

The national government at Washington, such as it was prior to the outbreak of the Rebellion, had been the object of varied degrees of patriotic devotion, but the average American voter had but a faint and fragmentary understanding of his duties relating to it or of its rights and powers relating to him.

These latter might be exceeded with impunity by Mr. Lincoln, so far as the masses of the people were concerned, so long as his action accorded at all with their conception of what it was best for him to do. It is therefore not very far from the truth to say that the President assumed and freely used, from time to time, all powers required by any emergency as being conferred upon him by the emergency. If these powers were also conferred upon him by the Constitution and the laws, as previously interpreted, so much the better for those instruments and for their previous interpretation. If not, it would answer equally well if Congress afterwards should pass laws covering the matters involved, and if the Constitution should be duly amended at the defective spot so discovered. Such is the fundamental law of all human societies in all revolutionary states and conditions. For Mr. Lincoln to have failed to utilize this would have been idiotically weak and would have involved sure destruction of the interests in his keeping.



From the first, nevertheless, all efforts were made to avoid unnecessary interferences with vested rights or the well-being of individuals. Mr. Lincoln's own personal characteristics came to the front in this connection. A large part of his daily annoyances came to him on account of his kindly inability to turn a deaf ear to a story of suffering or injustice. Any power he at any time assumed or exercised was taken not to himself at all. It was but a means applied to a manifest use, and, so far as he could determine, the best and most righteous means for the best and most righteous use. He toiled patiently and unselfishly. In such a multiplicity of duties his mind knew no rest, turning hourly from one branch of his responsibilities to another. He grappled resolutely with every problem put to him by his needs for action, foreign or domestic. It seems clear to those who knew him best that he himself perceived, as did many of his nearer observers, the swift and steady growth of his own capacities as a ruler of men. His inner life expanded under the intense heat of his trials. The strength of his will, the iron resolution which lay behind his easy-mannered kindness, had been manifested day by day from his very childhood; but the world contains a multitude of strong-willed, resolute, able, successful men not one of whom contains the rare material whereof a Revolution may construct for its needs a competent Ruler.

The times were testing him in many ways. Weaker men, often more brilliant in many expressions of capacity, began to come frequently into what resembled collisions with him. It was all but amusing, now and then, to witness their surprise at their own helplessness in such trials of their strength as had not called upon him for conscious exertion, just as in the early days he had quietly held out at arm's length the burly wrestler from Clary's-Grove.

He was now about to enter upon the most prolonged and perplexing of these collisions, and the only one which at any time seemed to present elements of public peril. His course

in the management of all minor difficulties may be rationally gathered or imagined after obtaining a fair understanding of the first struggle between "military authority" and "civil supremacy."

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

## PRESIDENT AND GENERAL.

The Army of the Potomac—Newspaper Acrobats—The President's Mail—Work of the Private Secretaries—Army Organization—An Advance which was Not Made—Offensive and Defensive War.

THE routine of Mr. Lincoln's office-work, during this first summer and autumn, as afterwards, was varied by occasional visits to the camps and forts, where he was always welcomed with enthusiasm. The personal attachment for him among the rank and file of the army grew faster and became stronger than his critics and enemies were at all willing to believe.

His evenings at home were also varied now not unfrequently by visits at the house of the general in command of the Army of the Potomac, when McClellan happened to be in the city. The President's course and personal relations with him for a time were, as nearly as might be, those of a confiding and familiar friend. The entire mass of the written correspondence between them bears witness to such a state of things. In the eyes of Mr. Lincoln's nearest advisers he seemed even too indifferent to all rules of military etiquette, and also to a very apparent assumption and arrogance in act and manner on the part of his brilliant subordinate. These were as yet of minor consequence, and the main thing, after all, was that the work in hand should be done.

There were great things going on in those days in the West and elsewhere; and of these we shall take due note farther on. But at the present juncture we have to do with matters which then chiefly engaged Mr. Lincoln's attention, and that

of the country at large throughout the Atlantic States. To the minds of people at Washington the Army of the Potomac was the Army of the United States. It was very important, certainly; and its splendid commander with his glittering staff dashing through the streets like a small earthquake-in-new-uniform were a wonder which must, men thought, dazzle the eyes of all the millions who were not there to see. The country at large was but moderately dazzled, and the President not at all. He knew that the area of the war extended beyond the picket-lines of that one army, for he was watching the swift fluctuations of success and disaster to the farthest frontier. He was also studying the rapid changes of thought and purpose among the people, and knew what a continual battle there was in the souls of men and women all over the North. He grew more and more absorbed in his work and more difficult of approach upon any but needful business.

Nevertheless it was during these months that he almost entirely gave up any attempt at reading the newspapers. He at one time instructed one of his private secretaries to make a daily digest of the attitude of the leading journals as editorially expressed.

It was actually so done for about a week. The President glanced at the digest once or twice, during that time, but he discovered how little he really cared for it all, and told the young man to return to more useful work. There were too many sudden "revolutions," perhaps, in the attitudes assumed by the journalists, while there was really but one with which he or the people had anything to do.

The mail of the Executive Mansion, always large, had now grown to a volume which was, probably, not afterwards increased. Its very size shut out all probability of its examination by Mr. Lincoln himself. Counting packages of documents as one "letter," the number of letters of all kinds varied from two hundred to two hundred and fifty each day. The range of subjects treated by the writers was about as wide as

the human imagination. It is possible that three per cent of these communications, including subsequent references, were at some time seen by the President. About half were sure to relate to business belonging to bureaus of the several executive departments and were at once forwarded to the proper places. The other half might contain a few which required filing in the President's own office for reference. The secretary's waste-basket received the mass remaining, of advice, abuse, fault-finding, insanity, egotism, and threats of personal violence. A careful estimate shows that of all the letters sent by mail to Mr. Lincoln, at this time, he saw and read, at the time of their arrival, about *one in a hundred*: less rather than more. The fact illustrates forcibly the absorption of his mind and the pressure upon his time and energies, for it had been his lifelong habit to examine with care every paper that came to him from any source, however humble. Even when some epistle of uncommon importance prompted the secretary in charge to urge its contents upon him, the response was sure to be, "Well, what is it?" and a digest in brief was expected unless the letter itself were of the briefest.

With the more persistently intrusive official and legislative multitude it was not possible to deal in a similar way. It was out of the question to put the most selfish of men into a waste-basket, nor was it easy to transfer such a person to his proper bureau. Nevertheless, the secretaries in charge of the matter did succeed in performing, for the throngs of callers, a process analogous in some of its results to that employed upon the mails.

Mr. Lincoln's time and strength were saved for him to the extent of their very good ability, and they protected him from untold annoyances. It was a good while before the President's patience gave way and he came, at last, to their assistance. Embodied pertinacities would succeed in getting in their "cards" and securing interviews to which they were not entitled.

Very much this state of things continued, to the end. Time

did but perfect the simple and unostentatious machinery with which the President performed his duties. He did but put himself continually into more complete connection with and relations to the vast and complicated organism of national administration which was fast assuming shape and efficiency.

In every corner of the country, all imaginable interests were adjusting their relations to the government, or discovering that they had any, mainly through the varied means by which they were induced to take upon them some share of the public burdens or were able to derive profit from the public expenditures.

Of all the formative processes, in all their ramifications, no other man knew or could know so much as did Mr. Lincoln. No better example can be given, perhaps, than the creation of the first Army of the Potomac. The credit of this has been generally accorded to McClellan, and the President is himself a witness that his first commander did zealously and well the part that by nature and assignment belonged to him. There is a sense in which it was the part of a truly great Orderly Sergeant, and ignorance only can underestimate or despise a work so vitally important.

The men who were to form that army had been gathered by Mr. Lincoln, as has been seen, and they were now in the service of the United States under due form of law. The selections of regimental officers had been made under State authorities.

The appointment of brigade, division, and corps commanders was in the hands of the President. So of all appointments in the Ordnance, Commissary, and Quartermaster services; and the connection of these with the War Office continued to be more or less direct, even after they were ordered to duty. Their efficiency depended largely upon that of their specific official superiors, and these were practically on the staff of the President. The latter had, therefore, not only an intimate knowledge of the conditions of the army, but an especial respon-



sibility concerning its operations. It was this which gave him the right to complain when after all had been done except the duty of the field-commander, performance failed to follow preparations and so vast and costly a machine remained comparatively unemployed.

This, as hinted above, grew to be Mr. Lincoln's chief care during that momentous winter of 1861-2. As is well known, an "advance" of the Army of the Potomac had been planned, and, by an order issued by the President on the 27th of January, it was to take place on the 22d of February. Every effort had been made that there should by that time be at least a show presented to the nation of something to come of all the sacrifices it was making. The President knew but too well the profoundly disturbed and irritated state of public feeling. He knew how much of justice was in the eager popular demand for "action," and had been uttering it continually in every form of speech and writing. He had studied and planned and provided, toiling by day and night that nothing required should be lacking. He was intensely, absorbingly interested, and had been positively assured that the ordered advance would be duly made. He was not in any manner undeceived until a day or two before the date assigned. He was alone in his room when an officer of General McClellan's staff was announced by the door-keeper and was admitted. The President turned in his chair to hear, and was informed, in respectful set terms, that the advance movement could not be made.

"Why?" he curtly demanded.

"The pontoon trains are not ready—"

"Why in hell and damnation *ain't* they ready?"

The officer could think of no satisfactory reply, but turned very hastily and left the room. Mr. Lincoln also turned to the table and resumed the work before him, but wrote at about double his ordinary speed.

Little apology is called for by the precise manner of his expression; entirely at variance from his habit of speech, it was

extorted from him by the awful pressure of months concentrated in the intense irritation of an instant.

While all the records of that period and particularly his own correspondence, official and private, are full of strong commentaries upon the fidelity with which he labored for the perfection of the Army of the Potomac, he was equally hard at work for and with every other army. He by no means neglected the Navy, and he shared with Mr. Seward the pressure of foreign affairs. No commander, of course, could give due weight to all this, or more than a thought or so to the questions of finance and national politics, without a due care of which by the President the armed forces could not be kept in the field.

There were times when General McClellan seemed even less able than other military men to grasp an idea which conflicted with the fulfilment of his own demands, and his capacity for waiting a little longer was marvelous.

As early as October 27, 1861, he officially reported, to the Secretary of War, that he had under his command, ready for duty, 147,695 men, of all arms, with additional forces, not yet ready for duty but in course of preparation and soon to become so, that swelled his muster-roll to 168,318. More men were constantly arriving, and the question in the minds of the people and their President was identical: "Why is not something decisive done with such an army?"

No sufficient answer was given, then or afterwards; or ever can be.

For an advance, leaving the capital well protected, General McClellan officially reported that, at that date, he had at his disposal 76,285 men and 228 pieces of artillery.

The President felt that his relations to the forces in the field were not altogether conferred upon him by the article in the Constitution which declared him the Commander-in-Chief. Peculiarly was it true of the Army of the Potomac that he had created it. Governors of States, generals, heads of bureaus, all subordinate agencies, had done their duty. The people had

responded nobly to every call. Still it was true that no such army, or any army at all, would then have been upon the Potomac if the President had awaited the action of States and governors and legislators. The organization of both army and navy had, in his mind, preceded the fall of Sumter, and the Army of the Potomac found its nucleus in the regular and volunteer recruits he began to gather in the last weeks of April, 1861. But for this nucleus the subsequent "army" would have formed, if at all, elsewhere than on the line of the Potomac.

The reports of General McClellan show that 50,000 men were prepared for field-duty during each consecutive thirty days, from July 27 to October 27. The South had been at work longer and had accomplished less, because its equally efficient subordinates had a less competent head to direct and sustain them. That this was true was made less important from the technically defensive nature of the war to be carried on by them and the character of the areas to be defended. For Southern purposes, except as to the numbers arrayed for any one encounter, every hundred men they could raise and equip at home was an offset to three hundred of the far distant Northern recruits; for, the value of individual soldiers being equal, the longer the march of a Union army to a battle-field, the more was its likelihood of being outnumbered when it arrived.

The Confederates, therefore, had men enough. The "Copperheads" of the North were useful allies to them at all times. Europe aided them in many ways. Even the stormy zeal of impatient patriots in the free States sometimes fought for them. They found help of some kind at every turn. They found an unintentional but extraordinary co-operation in the prolonged idleness of the Army of the Potomac. It is not too much to say that, in the early fall of 1861, Mr. Lincoln seemed to have a splendid army at his disposal, but was compelled to waste the months until spring in obtaining the adoption of digested

plans for its employment. The result was that, at the last, the army was in no better condition for actual service; the plans finally acted upon were fragmentary and incomplete; time and money and much precious human life had been thrown away; and the campaign which followed did but crown the mournful record with the fruits of hesitation, in disaster and discouragement.

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

## DICTATOR AND CONGRESS.

The Legislative Branch—The Committee on the Conduct of the War—  
Useful Interference—Councils and Umpires—Political Complications  
Beginning—Civilian and Soldier.

THE position of President Lincoln in the year 1862 cannot be studied advantageously without a glance at his relations to the National Legislature which assembled at Washington in the winter.

Congress came together with the majority of its membership in a red heat of patriotism. There was a minority, indeed, and the material for an "opposition," but only a very few ultraists cared to be known as anti-war men. Omitting the extreme Copperheads, every member was under a sort of triple pressure:—of his own ideas as to the prosecution of the war; of a knowledge of the feverish eagerness of his constituents for the suppression of the Rebellion; and of the even greater eagerness of a persistent fraction of that same constituency to obtain civil or military offices under the general government.

There were, indeed, a great many offices to be given, and these were all nominally at the disposal of Mr. Lincoln. He had a vast amount of trouble in avoiding the onerous responsibility of giving that wide business his personal attention. He succeeded fairly well, but could not escape altogether. He drily remarked of it all that there were twenty applicants for each office, and every time he filled one he made twenty enemies. The nineteen were enemies because they were disappointed, and the man appointed hated him because he

thought he ought to have a better place or because he was indebted for it to some other man.

As a body, Congress was profoundly ignorant of the Dictatorship, although a few voices made bold to denounce it. The idea prevailed that the government had traveled thus far by virtue of the work done during the hasty summer session of 1861. The President had obeyed and followed very well, but must now be again taken in hand a little. It was not long before the "Legislative Branch" of the government began to interfere with the "Executive Branch" in military matters. It was a little more patriotic than constitutional, but Mr. Lincoln had no manner of objection. When, in December, 1861, Congress appointed a strong and capable "Committee on the Conduct of the War," its members were at once taken into hearty and intimate consultation. What would surely have been a peril or a hindrance to a weak or a selfish ruler was transformed at once into an additional and powerful guaranty of Congressional co-operation. It was not so much, thenceforward, that Congress had assumed a part of the Executive province, but that the Executive had deftly provided himself with personal and official representatives upon the floor of Senate and House.

This Committee, constantly advised with, cordially invited to investigate, to consider, to come and to go, and to know everything before it happened, became a priceless safety-valve for the growing discontent over inexplicable delays. Without it, there can now be little question that Mr. Lincoln would have been more seriously misunderstood and even antagonized by the body of men nominally represented by the committee.

The President of the United States is Constitutionally the Commander-in-Chief, and Abraham Lincoln was also actually Dictator; but he was entirely at ease as to all his rights and dignities when a joint committee of Senators and Representatives freely summoned before them his military officers, by the dozen, and called for their views of things in general and their



professional opinions of battles and campaigns. He knew beforehand that the sure result would be the strong and unanimous sympathy of that "jury" of clear-headed men, with him personally, and their approval of the general outlines of his policy, however much they might disagree among themselves or with him as to details of specific operations. In the long run it turned out as he expected.

Congress had appointed seven of its best men to find fault with the President, and grumble at him, and agree with him, and help him; and to help the nation stand by him more firmly than ever. Changed in its membership somewhat, as time went on, the Committee continued its services to the end of the war. Never at any time were they of greater utility than in their close and searching study of the condition of the army and the causes of its inaction during the long trial of that memorable winter. At the same time, their personal pressure, and that of Congress exerted upon Mr. Lincoln through them, was an additional burden of no insignificant weight.

It is now very easy to perceive that if the President had at once assumed the full exercise of his nominal powers as Commander-in-Chief, forcing a reluctant general and his minor generals to a course of action for which they avowed themselves unprepared, the results could hardly have been other than disastrous. The President fully understood this feature of his responsibilities, and it was forcibly dwelt upon by his civil and military advisers. It was also true that the latter held erroneous ideas of the Rebel forces opposed to them, and magnified less than fifty thousand effective men into a hundred and fifteen thousand in their official estimates; but Mr. Lincoln had no trustworthy means of refuting the error. He believed it to be one, but was compelled to submit to its effects as patiently as the circumstances permitted. He did so, but even his tough patience wore slowly away, as has been related, and at last became altogether exhausted.

It has been said and printed that he "disclaimed all military

ability," and it is true that he often spoke very modestly of his pretensions; but the necessity was upon him, and he continually and distinctly and from the beginning exercised the important functions of a military umpire. His decision was final in the selection of plans and in their modifications as campaigns progressed. This was equally true when he yielded his own opinion to that of another. It was unavoidable, in the absence of any one military authority of well-attested value. He never shirked the implied responsibility; but the records, so far as these are preserved, clearly sustain the conclusion that the announced and adopted decisions and plans attributed solely or mainly to him were in fact the verdicts of a sort of perpetual "council of war" of which he was the conspicuous chairman. This council was of varying membership and size, but he made it include not only his maps and books but the best educated and informed military capacity in the country. To this he added the Committee on the Conduct of the War and judicious selections from his Cabinet. He would gladly have been relieved of a responsibility so heavy. The hour and the man for his relief came at last, but neither had arrived in 1862.

Now that the veils of the army lines are removed from the then hidden condition of the Confederate armies between Richmond and Washington, and all personal and political considerations can be omitted from an analysis of the situation, the attitude and action of Mr. Lincoln, prior to the Peninsular campaign of 1862, is more than justified.

Beginning in full time, he had summoned an army and had strained all the resources of the country to prepare it for the field. At the earliest day of its apparent readiness he had urged the prompt and vigorous use of that army in a forward movement. His estimate of the opposing forces and their power to resist such an attack is now proved to have been correct. As to specific plans of movements, military critics are yet divided concerning the relative wisdom of such as were

presented by General McClellan, representing his own council of war, on the one side, and by Mr. Lincoln on the other as the fruit of the joint skill and wisdom of the "council" over which he presided. There is, however, no longer any respectable authority bold enough to commend the inaction against which the President so earnestly strove and protested.

The campaign on the Potomac was but a part of the load upon his shoulders, and he was sufficiently wise and self-controlled not to exercise the fullness of his authority, even when compelled to say, as he did to General McDowell, in December, 1861, "If something is not done soon, the bottom will be out of the whole affair." He was well aware that a yet more certain ruin to the national cause would follow the failure of any great military movement directly ordered by himself, and that no campaign can be more sure of failure than one undertaken contrary to the will of its controlling general and his most trusted lieutenants.

Perhaps the most striking fact of all is that the apparent repugnance to forward movements never ceased. It was manifested, under various forms, to the very end of the Peninsular campaign, and even later. It is in vain now, but it is hardly possible not to ask the question: "What would have been the net results of the campaigns upon the Potomac in 1861 and 1862 if President Lincoln had been sustained by a general as eager for action as himself and as correctly estimating the strength of his own army and the enemy?"

The natural reply is: "Why, then, did not Mr. Lincoln remove McClellan at once and appoint some other commander?" It was urged upon him more than once or twice, and he answered it by the homely anecdote of the man who declared it "a bad time to swap horses when you are crossing a freshet."

True, doubtless; but there was more than a question of mere military expediency in the way, and the President labored under difficulties which are worthy of record.

In some inscrutable manner, General McClellan had become, and was too well aware of it, the chief and representative of that part of the American people which had not given its heart to Mr. Lincoln, however full it might be of genuine patriotism. McClellan was also curiously adopted by that other part of the population which had no patriotism whatever and which hated alike the President and the cause he represented.

There had not yet been time, nor heat, nor suffering, to hammer and weld the nation into a compact mass with reference to the issues of the war, and the base upon which the government stood was appreciably narrow and infirm. The powers in the hands of Mr. Lincoln, even as Dictator, were mainly executive and directory, rather than creative. He was compelled to meet and deal with all the forces of the hour, whether assistant or opposing, just as they were and not as he might have wished them. There was an indefinite mark at which his power might break in his hands if unwisely overstrained. He well understood the unreasoning enthusiasm with which the greater part of the army regarded their young and, as they deemed him, their "dashing" commander. They had seen him dash, frequently and at full gallop, through camp after camp, accompanied by a brilliant staff which contained sprigs of European royalty. They had, indeed, manipulated the Comte de Paris and the Duc de Chartres into "Captain Parry" and "Captain Chatters," but these were still a kind of wandering king, and the great general, the young American Napoleon, had his tent full of that kind of men and was teaching them the art of war. He was also teaching it, they half believed, to the rest of the army and to Congress and to Mr. Lincoln, and some day he would give the Confederates a complete course of instruction.

The intensity of the army jealousy of "civilian interference" offers an utterly ludicrous aspect of the situation, considering who and what were the civilians in question and who and what were the "military." Still, it was a power and not to

be disregarded, and had much to do with the President's long endurance of General McClellan's procrastination. The existence of such an obstacle seems to have been unknown to the country at large at the time, but it was sadly set forth afterwards, in detail, in the testimony given on the trial of Fitz John Porter, after the second battle of Bull Run.

The Peninsular campaign was an accomplished failure before the removal of McClellan, but that was no hindrance to the persistent declaration, by his partisans, that the failure had been ordained and engineered by "civilians" at Washington, in order that disaster might furnish a pretext for the removal.

Mr. Lincoln's position was one of extreme delicacy, but at last the Confederate authorities came to his deliverance. The final adoption of a plan of campaign for the Union armies was provided for at Richmond. Early in March, 1862, the rebel generals concluded that their forces at and about Manassas Gap had bearded and checked an army three times their strength as long as it was safe to do so. They retreated, without striking a blow, or so much as giving warning, or even saying what they meant to do next.

So bitter and taunting a comment upon the wisdom of Mr. Lincoln's previous urgency enabled him to compel army action of some kind. At a meeting of the corps commanders of the Army of the Potomac, on the 13th of March, the retreat of the enemy was formally recognized; a plan of an advance upon Richmond was adopted, approved by General McClellan, and forwarded to the President. It is worthy of note that his official approval and reply, through the Secretary of War, was instantaneous. It bears the same date of March 13, 1862. Whatever default of energy or promptness might be chargeable to others, not an hour of precious time was wasted by the Commander-in-Chief.

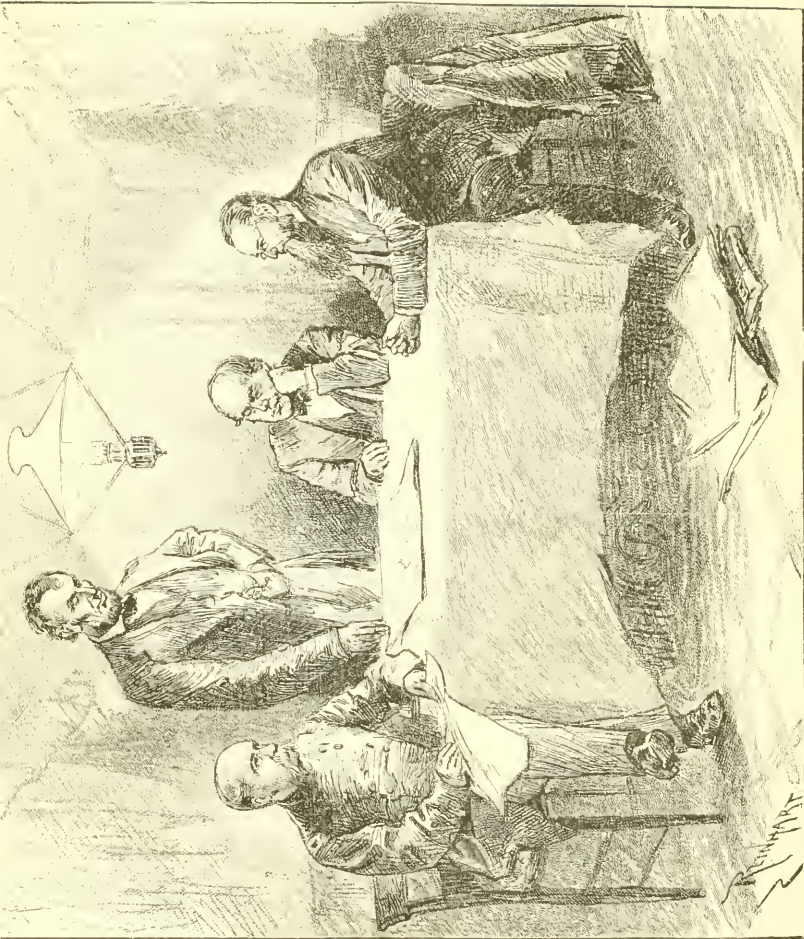
The joint dates of the Army plan and of its approval by Mr. Lincoln once more bring out the fact of his continuous and perfect state of preparation. He did not wait and study,

because he did not need to do so. He had carefully digested the whole subject, and no form of its presentation could take him by surprise. As he himself was apt to remark when seemingly new things were laid before him, he had "studied that matter," and his action upon it was a foregone conclusion.

It was said that a plan had been adopted, but, after all, it was little more than a determination that the army should sail down the Potomac, land on the Virginia side and hunt for something to do. It was agreed upon with Mr. Lincoln that the hunt should be pushed vigorously in the direction of Richmond, and he went down in person to urge and press and aid in every possible way the magnificent "meet" of well-armed hunters.







*Viele.*

*Lincoln.*

*Chase*

*Stanton.*

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

## THE PENINSULAR CAMPAIGN.

Monitor and Merrimac—The Story of a Great Invention—Waiting before Yorktown—Civil Supremacy in Danger—A Retreat in Good Order—A Perilous Dilemma—The Army of Virginia—Gen. Pope's Campaign—A New Political Party—One Army Swallowed by Another.

THE movement of the Army of the Potomac had been preceded by a great naval event. On the 8th of March, 1862, the Confederate armored ram *Virginia* or *Merrimac* steamed out into Hampton Roads and destroyed several United States ships-of-war. She demonstrated in a few minutes that any wooden or other war ship known to exist was helpless against her. So far as any eyes could see, the Potomac was open to her, Washington city was at her mercy, and the face of military affairs was changed. A kind of Egyptian darkness came down at once, and, for a few hours, men walked around as if they were feeling their way in it.

On the following day occurred the world-famous fight between the *Merrimac* and the *Monitor*, the latter being described by the Confederates, as looking like a Yankee cheese-box on a raft. The timely arrival of this revolving gun-tower was as little a matter of human foresight as if she had fallen from the sky, and the nation recovered promptly from its fit of shivering dread. The power of the destroyer was at least neutralized and things could go on somewhat as before. Not upon the sea, indeed ; for the naval construction of all the world was revolutionized in a day and all the armed vessels afloat, except the two which fought in Hampton Roads, became antiquated.

Mr. Lincoln had not foreseen the *Merrimac*, but he had foreseen the *Monitor* and her construction, and therefore her presence and service were as much due to him as was her planning to her inventor. When Mr. C. S. Bushnell, to whom the *Monitor* had been intrusted, and to whom lasting honor is due for his management of the matter, arrived in Washington with the plans and specifications of the proposed vessel, he carried them straightway to the President. Mr. Lincoln comprehended them at once and became deeply interested. He remarked, pleasantly, that he knew but little about ships, but he did understand a flatboat, and this invention was flat enough. He promised to meet Mr. Bushnell at the Navy Department at eleven o'clock the next day and do all he could in securing the adoption of the plan and the construction of a "monitor" for trial. That was precisely what she was built for, no one prophesying what the trial would be. At the hour named he left the White House and walked over to the Navy Department to fulfill his promise. A number of naval officers and other experts were assembled to sit in judgment, and the President listened patiently and silently to their successive expressions of opinion. These were almost unanimously given adversely to the practicability of the plan of vessel proposed. Finally, Rear-Admiral Smith, chairman of the Naval Board in charge of the matter, turned to the President and asked him what he thought of it.

"Well," said Mr. Lincoln, "I feel about it a good deal as the fat girl did when she put her foot into her stocking. She thought there was something in it."

There was a laugh, but everybody present understood that Mr. Lincoln was in earnest. Admiral Smith, who had been one of the few who had understood and favored the invention, was glad enough to be sustained by the President, and took it up with energy. Mr. Bushnell and his associates obtained their contract for a trial-monitor and built it, and after its work in Hampton Roads Mr. Lincoln had a right to express strongly,

as he did, his satisfaction over the fact that he "had given the *Monitor* a lift" at the time when, without it, she would have remained an inventor's dream.

The "co-operation of the Navy" was now more than ever a factor in the plans of the Army, and it was given with hearty efficiency. The troops were shipped and landed without any greater number of blunders than mark the records of similar feats of transportation in other wars. The enemy were in a bad condition to withstand the forward push the President continually urged. He was so anxious for action that, early in May, with Secretaries Stanton and Chase and General Viele of the Engineers, he went down to Hampton Roads on the U. S. steamer *Miami*, to see for himself how matters were. This happened (May 11) just as Norfolk was abandoned and the *Merrimac* blown up by the retiring Rebels. It is now well known, too, that McClellan could have marched to the very gates of Richmond with but moderate hindrance if he had not discovered a sort of reproduction of the "Manassas lines," with another imaginary host behind them. These were provided him by the petty defenses at Yorktown, and before these he promptly sat down. Mr. Lincoln wrote and urged in vain. It is not needful to deal with all the details of what may be considered a purely "tactical" controversy. The result was a simple and natural sort of repetition of the previous lesson. The army lay before Yorktown for a month, and the Confederate purpose in holding the place had been accomplished. When it was done, the few obstructing regiments and guns at Yorktown were quietly removed, and the Rebellion had again secured the results of a great victory without fighting a battle.

The remainder of the Peninsular campaign belongs to the military history of the war and not to the Life of Lincoln. At and before its outset and until it was completed and abandoned, the President was confronted, for the first and last time, with the peril, common to all human revolutions, that

the personal power and position of a favorite military officer might enable him to predominate over, or at least be practically independent of, the civil authority.

That General McClellan was, perhaps unintentionally, perhaps almost unconsciously, the exponent of that peril, was but imperfectly discerned by the President, for a time. It was more clearly perceived by others, following the course of events on the spot, and narrowly watching the demeanor of General McClellan in personal interviews with the President or with his own subordinates. It was yet more clear to those who listened to much of the ill-advised talk among some of the latter. It can even more plainly be discerned, at this day, by any student who will take the trouble to examine the official reports and correspondence. No man can now pretend to declare what might have been the consequences to the country if Mr. Lincoln had been less firm or less wisely forbearing and patient. A weak or hasty man in the President's chair would surely have fallen from it, if not in name, at least to all intents and purposes, and his power would have passed into the hands of the Army Commander.

As for the latter, all he really required was time to offer the able leaders opposed to him the opportunities of which they continually availed themselves.

They and not Mr. Lincoln demonstrated to the country the true rank of McClellan in the list of celebrated generals. It is not at all necessary to question his zeal, or patriotism, or uncommon capacity. To briefly paraphrase Mr. Lincoln's own words concerning him: "For the organization of an army, or for handling that army in a defensive campaign, second to no other general. For a vigorous advance movement, never ready." And add: "When forced to make such a movement, incapable of so making it as to succeed."

The last battle on the Virginia peninsula was fought, and well fought, on the first of July, 1862, at Malvern Hill. It was the repulse of a desperate attempt of the Confederates to



crush a retreating enemy. It brought out with great clearness the fact that the Army of the Potomac, with experience of such battle-names as Seven Pines, Fair Oaks, Mechanicsville, and Cold Harbor, had become an army of veterans, and that its commander held it well in hand. There was no sign of disorganization or of any lack of discipline or of confidence or patriotism among the men. Their retreat was secured and their assailants were too badly shattered to repeat the attack. Still, the campaign was a mournful failure, and any attempt to renew it, under General McClellan, would have shaken the hold of the government upon the nation. Neither could he, then and there, have been safely replaced by any other general. The most distinguished of his lieutenants did not hesitate to say that they could not and would not step into his place if he should be removed. It was, therefore, inevitable that the army should abandon the effort to reach Richmond by that road, and it was accordingly withdrawn, by Mr. Lincoln's orders, during the month of August, 1862.

After the withdrawal an increasing importance began to attach to the declarations made by General McClellan as to what he could and would have done had he been permitted to remain and had he been properly supported. That such assertions were made, and that they were echoed in many modifications, throughout the country by the growing and organizing opposition to Mr. Lincoln, was altogether a matter of course. The fact of the withdrawal afforded a spurious life to propositions incapable of disproof. A direct issue was created and assumed by what had actually become two jarring factions in all the land.

If, therefore, it were possible to admit all that was then or is now claimed by General McClellan and his friends, and to advance, on behalf of the Administration, no other fact than this direct issue, that is quite enough.

The President was compelled to relieve General McClellan of his command at as early a day as was consistent with the

proper care of the army. To have retained him would have been a public assumption by the President of the responsibility of his failure, and would have rendered all but impossible any further resistance to his demands. So would Mr. Lincoln have put a fatal weapon into the hands of his enemies, at the same time that he severed himself at a blow from the patriotic masses who sustained him and whose view of the whole matter closely coincided with his own.

A task of unusual delicacy was now before him. He was confronting questions of national politics and statesmanship as well as of war and the selection of military leaders. There were men, even among the friends of the Administration, who so grossly misconceived the feelings of the army as to assert that the soldiers would refuse to fight under any other commander than McClellan. Mr. Lincoln troubled himself very little about the rank and file. He knew them too well to have any doubt as to their choice between a favorite officer and their country. At the same time, he was indifferent to any casual and hasty remarks "the boys" might make about himself. They did not make many which would have been disagreeable for him to hear. The result showed that they understood the campaign they had been fighting better than the politicians gave them credit for, and they were beginning to understand Mr. Lincoln very well.

The main difficulty now in the mind of the latter was not at all the removal of McClellan, but the choice of his successor. There were reasons for preferring one of the well-known chiefs of the Army of the Potomac, but a brief search among them failed to discover the right man. Quite a number of them had exhibited high qualities and achieved reputation, but no one towered sufficiently above his brethren to be regarded by them as their selection for the first place. Each general felt and said that he could not take the reins of his falling leader without concentrating upon himself such jealousy and resentment as would impair his usefulness. What was worse, each seemed to

feel the same thing even more strongly on behalf of any other general whom Mr. Lincoln might choose to name.

The conclusion was plain. It was necessary that the new commander should be a man as far as possible removed from the operation of corps jealousies and what might almost be regarded as family contentions and neighborhood rivalries.

Military operations in the West had thus far been upon a smaller scale as to separate battles and campaigns, however vast in aggregate importance. A number of competent men were rapidly manifesting their abilities and making names for themselves. Nevertheless there had not been time or opportunity for any man to establish his pre-eminence as a general commanding large bodies of troops in the field. The course of events had not made a selection; and Mr. Lincoln did not actually make one, but he did the next best thing. He determined to keep on trying till he should find what he wanted.

What was called "The Army of Virginia" had been organized from the several commands operating in the western part of that State, and the troops reserved for the protection of the city of Washington. The organization was nominally effected, on paper, by a general order issued July 26, 1862, and Major-General John Pope, an officer of admitted merit, had been placed in command.

The Army of Virginia, therefore, was ready to receive and absorb the several detachments of the Army of the Potomac, as they arrived, on their return from the Peninsula. The two armies became somewhat as one, in that manner, under General Pope, without any formal change of commanders; but he had no time to get them at all well in hand, before he was called upon to meet the forces of the Rebellion upon their old battle-grounds in front of the defences of the national capital. The evacuation of the Peninsula had set them free from their task of defending Richmond. They turned to the northward and broke upon General Pope's army in a series of desperate encounters, whose disastrous results offered a fitting appendix

to the sad story which had previously concluded at Malvern Hill.

During nearly the whole course of this fighting, which included the second battle of Bull Run, General McClellan was at or near Washington. He was not exactly in disgrace or "removed," but he was in the position of a man temporarily out of work, for he was a general without an army. Mr. Lincoln had carefully avoided open collision with him, and had treated him in a friendly manner, personally, but the general himself and the whole country well understood the situation.

The all but instantaneous political result justified the forecast of Mr. Lincoln's sagacity, for the Democratic party of the North, destitute of great names and leaders, at once took up the cause of McClellan as their own. They had no other, and it offered them a rallying-cry. When, therefore, at the close of General Pope's summer campaign, General McClellan reassumed command of the forces in the field, he did so as a "political idol" as well as a military leader. It was two years yet to the next Presidential election, but he was already the Democratic candidate. It was altogether a new Democratic party, and not the old, which was then in process of organization. It was sweeping into its embraces all disappointment, all discontent and sourness, and every element hostile to Mr. Lincoln personally and to the manifestly increasing antislavery tendencies of the Republican party and the Administration.

If the results of the hard fighting done by the army under Pope had been less unfavorable, a different course might have been possible, but the close of the month of August left the President with no choice whatever. Loud voices were heard in all the camps and columns of the army. Not those of any considerable majority, doubtless, but likely to be joined by others if things should continue to go wrong. It was necessary to heed them and to act at once, for the victorious rebels, in spite of the severe losses they had suffered, were about to pour across the upper Potomac and carry the war into the Northern States.

Mr. Lincoln, as has been seen, had no doubt at all of General McClellan's capacity for the kind of work now to be required of him. It was not exactly a forward movement. There was no need to issue any formal order reinstating an officer who had never been publicly or formally removed and who still retained his full rank in the army. Indeed, so little had been done to interfere with the personal cordialities existing between all the parties concerned, in spite of the tremendous war of words between their respective admirers and defenders, that Mr. Lincoln himself, accompanied by General Halleck, actually called at McClellan's house, in Washington, on the morning of the 2d of September, 1862, instead of sending for him to come to the War Office or the Executive Mansion.

The whole affair, as it is related by General McClellan, sounds wonderfully like Abraham Lincoln's lifelong way of doing things. He had nothing to say about the past and was in no wise disturbed by any part of his own previous action. He had, however, a good deal to say about the present state of affairs in the army. He said it briefly, and then, relates the general: "He instructed me to take steps at once to stop and collect the stragglers; to place the works in a proper state of defense, and to go out and meet and take command of the army, when it approached the vicinity of the works, then to place the troops in the best position,—committing everything to my hands."

General Pope was not "removed," any more than General McClellan had been. He was still in command of the Army of Virginia, but was thus subordinated to General McClellan. Within two weeks, the Army of the Potomac had quietly swallowed the very organization by which its own separate corps and divisions and brigades had previously been absorbed, as fast as they arrived from the Peninsula. This result was strictly logical, for the greater must contain the less, but a good half of the troops now under McClellan were men who had not been with him before Richmond and were by no

means his admirers. They were "his men" only because of orders from headquarters, and the spell of his power had been broken.

As to the restoration of the old name to the consolidated mass, Mr. Lincoln had no objection. "The boys" would fight as well, or better, and that was the main thing, for they had sharp work cut out for them.

Only a small part of the army under Pope had been "disorganized," in any correct use of that term. The great mass of them was in good condition. The men had fought well and were proud of it, and had not lost confidence in their immediate commanders. They had fought so well, indeed, that the forces under General Lee were seriously diminished in numbers and efficiency. Not all the glory of their barren victories could make up to them the loss of so many of their best soldiers, both officers and men.

Had the condition of the troops been at all as some have misrepresented it, active operations at once, with those very men, under McClellan, would have been absurdly impossible. As it really was, he had no manner of difficulty in getting them well in hand as he marched. He performed no miracle, and their fighting condition was forcibly exemplified, in a very few days, at the battles of South Mountain and the Antietam.



## CHAPTER XXXIX.

## MILITARY POLITICS.

Reconstruction—Jarring Counsels—Gen. John C. Frémont—A Premature Proclamation—A Modification—Another Subordinate laying down the Law to the President—A New Secretary of War—A Human Library.

THE shattered aggregate of rusty political machinery which fell into Mr. Lincoln's hands, at the close of the Buchanan Administration, was not a "government."

The tumultuous mass of factions and local organisms under his nominal chief magistracy was not a "nation."

What he would make of the one and what would become of the other were open questions in the minds of all men, of all parties, in this and other countries, and they were very freely debated in public and in private.

The post to which Abraham Lincoln was really elected, and the position he proceeded to occupy and fill, was that of an expression of the deeply rooted and tenacious popular will that there should be a government, and a strong one, and that this government should organize and perpetuate a nation.

His whole life had prepared him for the task. The causes which prepared the task for him had been subjects of his study from boyhood. He met all difficulties, as they arose, in a manner which testified what familiar acquaintances they were and how much he had been thinking that they might visit him some day.

As has been seen, the new government took form rapidly, and the solid ground of the new nation began to arise with a very permanent look, through and above the turbulent political flood.

It was not as yet easy to designate or limit the powers of the government in "war time," but the ideas of other men as to the extent and nature of these powers were more vague than were those of the ruler himself. He saw that he had, as President, and acting as Dictator in many relations, the power to do anything which the people could be made to see it was needful or best that he should do. He had no more, because that and no other is always the limit of the power of a revolutionary autocrat. The people had many ways of expressing their approval, and their faithful servant had little need to regard the vagaries of individuals, so long as he was devotedly doing his duty.

It was essential to the performance of Mr. Lincoln's task that no element of substantial power should be permitted to slip away from him or from either branch of the central government which he represented. Congress and the Judiciary and the Executive were bound together as a unit. It was natural, however, and was a difficulty which came early and never departed, that the President should find himself in continual collision with the political views, the aspirations and ambitions, of the able men around him. That these all had views, aspirations, and ambitions, is to be mentioned in their praise and not in blame.

The difficulty arising from this source was aggravated by the fact that every general in the army, whether he would or no, was also in some degree a political general and possible leader. It was of course that many of even the best should be aware of this and should cultivate "doctrinal views" of their own, and by these should at times be influenced, more or less, in their uses of the powers they derived from the central authority at Washington. Almost the first military officers to whom high commands were assigned at once began to administer those commands in accordance with their political leanings and lookings forward. It was safe to prophesy that the country would select its party idols and rulers, for a gen-

eration or so after the war, from among those who should come out of it in the character of "heroes." Had the South succeeded, the Confederacy would necessarily have become a sort of military despotism, sustained and governed by an epauletted and army-titled aristocracy. Only the firmness and wisdom of Mr. Lincoln prevented the Federal government from drifting, at an early day, under the control of the ranking officers of its first military organization. That, too, with these very officers at wide variance among themselves as to vital questions of policy and statesmanship.

Two instances suffice to illustrate the situation and vindicate the course pursued by Mr. Lincoln: and it is not at all necessary to claim for him perfection of wisdom or of conduct in either case. It is necessary to say, however, that Mr. Lincoln did not act from personal motives in either, and that least of all did he act from jealousy or unkindly feeling.

On the same day in which General McClellan assumed command of the troops in front of Washington, General John C. Frémont arrived in St. Louis, Missouri, to take command of the Department of the West. There was as yet very little for him to take command of, and two thirds of the populations of Southern Illinois, Missouri, and Kentucky, including many thousands who afterwards became devoted supporters of the national government, were wavering in almost helpless indecision as to which way they should go, to the Confederacy or to the Union. In the city of St. Louis itself leading business men were contributing timidly to the military funds of both Rebel and Union undertakings, and begging the agents of either side not to make public their names or their payments. In the rural districts of Missouri the loyal people were generally overawed by their more violent as well as better prepared and organized antagonists. In Southern Illinois the majority of the people were from Southern States, densely ignorant and strongly pro-slavery in sentiment. Their geographical position and little more, as yet, retained them under

the sway of an "Abolition government." Kentucky was still occupying an attitude of "neutrality" which was repudiated by Mr. Lincoln, but which answered a most important purpose in keeping the State out of the first mad rush of the Rebellion. Its people were having time given them to think the matter over and, in due season, to welcome Federal armies as deliverers and defenders.

General Frémont was a brave and intelligent officer, doubtless, although he never at any time established a reputation as a "general." It is fair to say that he never had a good opportunity. He had qualities of mind which prevented him from being a successful "statesman." He was a man of reckless daring, undisguised ambition, strong imagination, and was already prominent as a political leader. He had been the "standard-bearer" selected by the People's party for their hopeless, but earnest and first aggressive campaign of 1856, and a good deal of the popular enthusiasm aroused for him then, as a candidate for the Presidency, still clung to his name in 1861. The romance of his early achievements as an explorer of the Rocky Mountains, and of his dashing military exploits in California, had been made widely known during his presidential campaign. There were many, indeed, who regarded him as in some inscrutable way the "founder" of the party which had nominated him, and which was so speedily reorganized as the Republican party after its first brilliant struggle.

General Frémont was a Radical, with an opportunity in his hands for making himself the representative man and leader of all the Radicals of the North. He took the opportunity very sincerely but very humanly. His immediate ambition, beyond doubt, was patriotic and military; but it naturally, inevitably, had a political horizon beyond and all around it. There is no need of flinching a fact so entirely devoid of anything blameworthy. He had, at the outset, several difficulties with the War Office at Washington, and in some of these the record

favours him decidedly. He took hold of his work with characteristic promptness and vigor, and, under many disadvantages, began to collect and arm troops. He also began to fortify his base of action, St. Louis, so that it might be safely left in subsequent operations. So far all was well; but before he had forces enough to make sure of any part of his infant department, on the 31st of August, 1861, he issued a proclamation, altogether on his own account. He declared martial law within specified limits, and threatened instant death to all rebels found within those lines with arms in their hands. He declared all real and personal property of all persons taking up arms against the government confiscated to the public use, and their slaves, if they had any, were declared free.

It was a curious document, in which a subordinate army officer, in charge of a department under Mr. Lincoln, assumed to exercise the joint and several powers of the President, Congress, and the Judiciary. It was doubtless intended as a military measure, to awe the rebel elements around him and improve the morals of his own little army; but it was, in fact, something more. It was a political firebrand hurled among the combustible populations above described, and the effect threatened to be disastrous, both there and elsewhere. The effect upon General Frémont's personal popularity with the most loyal elements of the populations of the free States was, for the moment, all he could have asked for. He had appealed, in one breath, to patriotism, hatred of slavery, and to the vague, popular lust for more vigorous measures. A great many excellent people were temporarily misled into loud approval of his usurpation of authority over life and property, and failed to see the mad impolicy of his really empty threats. The general thus presented the President with a problem of more than common difficulty; but, at the same time, he performed an important service. He at least warned the waverers in the doubtful districts that there might be a wrath to come, and many of them needed such a warning. Even in overstepping

his own powers he gave the government an opportunity for the better defining its own. He directed the perceptions of all men, in good season, towards the sure result of the Rebellion—that “abolition of slavery” which so few were yet prepared to face and consider.

Mr. Lincoln was disposed to give Frémont an opportunity for correcting, as of his own motion, the more manifest excesses of his proclamation ; but the general received his remonstrances, for such they were, with a plain refusal to recede. Even the President’s intimation that Congress then had in hand the subject of the confiscation of rebel property does not seem to have opened the somewhat self-willed commander’s eyes to the fact that the legislative and judicial branches of the general government had sole power for the making of laws concerning the ownership of real and personal property. As to the emancipation of slaves, especially, he requested that, if his proclamation in that regard were to be modified, the President should do it for him, showing that he, the general, had not retreated from a hasty and ill-considered advanced position, but had been overruled from Washington. He claimed that it was as much his province to initiate such a policy, in the department for which he was responsible, as to adopt and order any other strategic or tactical movement, as of troops. If the President disagreed with him, he prayed that the President should take the responsibility of publicly saying so. Whatever was Frémont’s motive,—and no man could question his political sincerity,—the effect of this would be to leave to him, untouched and perhaps augmented, the entire benefit of the popularity he had evidently won. Mr. Lincoln was quite willing to resign to the general all that part of the “spoils of war,” and in a dispatch dated October 6, 1861, he said : “It is therefore ordered that said clause of said proclamation be so modified, held, and construed as to conform to and not to transcend the provisions on the same subject contained in the Act of Congress entitled ‘An Act to confiscate property used for in-



surrectionary purposes,' approved August 6, 1861, and that such Act be published at length, with this order."

General Frémont yielded externally, but set the seal of his disapprobation upon the order by manumitting, on the following day, two slaves, the property of a St. Louis rebel. His subsequent management of the affairs of his department displayed both his abilities and peculiarities; and before the middle of October—in spite of what he had accomplished in raising and equipping troops, in clearing Missouri of guerilla bands, in securing Cairo, an important entrepot for supplies at the junction of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, in beginning the afterwards famous fleet of gunboats, and other efficient preparations for good work,—Mr. Lincoln felt compelled to replace him by the appointment of an officer less brilliantly erratic and with fewer probabilities of political aspiration. The entire nation better understood its relations to both the President and the general before the arrival of another Presidential election. At that time, however, it was not so well comprehended that the President's action was taken on grounds of public policy and sound statesmanship. It was contrasted strongly by many with the retention in power of General McClellan, equally well known to be in training as a candidate for political power, but proposing to reach it by following a very different political highway. It is at all events to General Frémont's credit that his instincts were in favor of loyalty and freedom, and his deeds in the direction of military activity and efficiency.

At the time of General McClellan's appointment to the command of the Army of the Potomac he was still a young man. He had his name yet to win as a commander in the field. He had attained neither experience nor distinction as a politician, much less as a statesman. He had no position whatever, except as one of Mr. Lincoln's military subordinates. Nevertheless, so strong were the temptations of the hour and so manifest were the openings leading to possible political eminence.

that we speedily find him undertaking to advise and even to direct the policy of the government. It is almost beyond belief at this day, but in less than one year from his appointment, under date of July 7, 1862, we find General McClellan writing to President Lincoln from Harrison's Landing, and that too with his Peninsular campaign just behind him, as follows:

"Military power should not be allowed to interfere with the relations of servitude, either by supporting or impairing the authority of the master, except for repressing disorder, as in other cases."

This meant, being interpreted:

"Whatever else may be the object of this war, it must not disturb Slavery, and any slave accidentally relieved of his fetters must have them replaced as soon as the accident can be provided for."

The tone and matter of that letter, or of any one of several others, supply a window through which can plainly be discerned the writer's estimate of his own position, prerogative, and power, as well as his clear understanding that a large constituency in the army and among the people already regarded him as their political representative.

How nearly correct his estimate was may partly be gathered from the election returns of the year 1864. A study of these, and of events between their date and the date of this letter to Mr. Lincoln, will lead to the conclusion that in July, 1862, he was more strongly fortified as a political leader than he ever was afterwards. He was strong then in every respect but in his lack of the legal authority to retain his military command for one day after Mr. Lincoln should decide that he had held it long enough. If an election could then have been held, its results would have been vastly more in doubt. That was but nine months after the removal of Frémont, and nothing had occurred in the interim, East or West, to encourage the people as to the probable end and outcome of the war. The more exposed of the districts endangered by the over-hasty zeal of

Frémont were still being fought over, backwards and forwards, with varying successes, by contending armies. The "successes" had not exhibited quite so much variation on the Potomac, and this, too, was laid at Mr. Lincoln's door.

It was plainly needful that General McClellan should be induced to give up playing President for a little while. It was impossible to give him troops for the renewal of his advance upon Richmond, even if it had been wise to do so. His urgent demand for them was denied and overruled, but the fact that the President had no troops which could safely be sent him was one which he and his partisans could and did ignore. Nevertheless, his political fortunes culminated when the Army of the Potomac was transferred, even in part and for a few days, from under his immediate command.

It was but for a few days, apparently. General Pope's summer campaign of hot marches and hard battles, by no means all of which are to be classed as defeats, must be regarded as little more than a campaign to keep the enemy occupied and checked during the removal of the Army of the Potomac from Harrison's Landing to Aquia Creek and the lines opposite Washington. The fighting covered a retreat.

At this time the country at large believed itself to be straining its every nerve to carry on the war. It was mistaken, but the time had not come for the safe application of greater pressure. The assistance of Congress would be required for that. The President's powers were temporarily restricted to the utilization of such war material as he had on hand or within easy reach. It did not suffice for the creation of new armies to be expended by General McClellan on the wrong road to Richmond.

Other changes had taken place. The Department of War had been revolutionized during the first months of 1862. When Mr. Lincoln appointed Simon Cameron his first Secretary of War, he unintentionally assigned that very capable gentleman to a post at which he was as sure to fall as was the color-

bearer of a "forlorn hope." Upon him rushed the first and most impudent swarm of contractors, speculators, adventurers, plunderers of every name and kind. Upon him surely fell the hasty anger of the people for the inevitable crudities of the first year of the existence of the army. He was compelled to resign, for the good of the service; but Mr. Lincoln answered his detractors by appointing him minister to Russia, the best national friend we then had among the larger powers of Europe. Mr. Cameron doubtless had his defects as a Secretary of War in such a time, but his career enabled Mr. Lincoln to make up his mind as to the kind of man the place required. He knew just such a man. His name was Edwin M. Stanton, a resident of the District of Columbia, an old-time Democrat in politics, a lawyer of distinction, but without popularity anywhere or personal following of any kind. He was absolutely sure never to have either. His sturdy loyalty had been proved as by fire during a brief service as a member of Buchanan's last Cabinet. He had helped to keep the governmental wreck from being entirely swept away before Mr. Lincoln's arrival.

Mr. Lincoln had met Mr. Stanton before that day, and knew him to be the possessor of certain personal qualities which were as rare as they were likely now to become valuable. In the summer of the year 1859 Mr. Lincoln went to Cincinnati, Ohio, as one of the associate counsel in the great "McCormick reaper case." The leading counsel on his side was Mr. Stanton, and that gentleman had imbibed a bitter prejudice, political or otherwise, against his ungainly colleague from Illinois. Such was, in consequence, his habitual and pointed rudeness that Mr. Lincoln's self-respect compelled him to retire from the case. When he got home he remarked that he "had never been so brutally treated as by that man Stanton."

He was with him long enough, however, to discover in him a peculiar executive ability, tirelessness, disregard of obstacles, and a ravenous capacity for the mastery of details, rare indeed among men, while the bluntness, directness, even the harshness

amounting to brutality, were gifts eminently desirable in the Secretary of War of the United States during the years which were now to follow. It was a certainty that men would have no ground whereon to accuse Mr. Stanton of favoritism or of paltering with treason, and his official chief would never be in effect betrayed by weak-kneed subserviency. The latter consideration was almost beyond price in those days.

The new Secretary would be just the man to stand between the Treasury and the contractors, at the same time that he would relieve the President of some of the most trying responsibilities of army management.

There was much criticism of this appointment among the friends of Mr. Lincoln, and they gave him loads of advice. He was urged to appoint a man from New England, or one who might be considered in some beneficial manner politically or geographically representative. He had done a great deal of that sort of thing in the first organization of his Cabinet, and the net results had not impressed him with its importance as a source of anything he was now in need of. He did not believe that any one segment of the national territory contained a man sufficiently representative of its population to be able to add an ounce of strength to the Administration by his appointment to office. He was well aware, on the other hand, that much strength might easily be lost by the appointment of a man obnoxious to extremists of any description.

Mr. Stanton had not as yet made himself offensive to any faction or fraction. To wise friends who expressed a fear of mischief to come from what they called his "impulsiveness," Mr. Lincoln replied: "Well, we may have to treat him as they are sometimes obliged to treat a Methodist minister I know of out West. He gets wrought up to so high a pitch of excitement in his prayers and exhortations that they are obliged to put bricks in his pockets to keep him down. We may be obliged to treat Stanton the same way, but I guess we will let him jump awhile first."

The restraining power hinted at in the anecdote was always at Mr. Stanton's elbow. His superfluous energy consumed itself in such ceaseless toil that, when the war was ended and the duties to which Mr. Lincoln assigned him were all done, the great War Secretary had expended his life for his country and very soon lay down for his long rest. That he would make countless enemies was well understood in the hour of his appointment, and that he continually did so was no surprise at all to Mr. Lincoln. That he should make many mistakes, especially in minor matters rapidly decided and acted upon, was as certain as sunset, but he never once made the cardinal blunders, in such a time, of cowardice, indecision, or inaction. He was, as nearly as might be, the very man Mr. Lincoln required for the hard place he was called to fill. He supplied qualities and training which had not been given to the President. Between the two men, so different, so strangely thrown together, there grew to be a bond of mutual reliance which had in it a remarkable thread of personal, human tenderness.

The constant study of military questions forced upon Mr. Lincoln's mind a perception of certain other defects in his own preparation for the post of Commander-in-Chief. Lack of technical knowledges and of the specific trainings of the military schools hampered him at every turn, and it was too late for him to take a "West Point course" of education. He could not even give the time required for the full examination of authorities or for miscellaneous consultations with all the generals from all the multiplying commands. It was needful, therefore, that he should have at his elbow some man whose carefully tilled and well-stored brain should be in itself a library of military sciences and knowledges, with all its volumes ready to open at the page. Precisely such a man had been made ready for him in the person of Major-General Henry W. Halleck. This officer had already distinguished himself by his management of affairs intrusted to him in the West, but Mr. Lincoln perceived that his best services were not to be



rendered in the field. He was essentially a military scholar, having devoted his life to studies, researches, and writings, of such a nature and quality as to mark him unmistakably as the man of men to supply Mr. Lincoln's technical and other deficiencies. On the 11th of July, 1862, General Halleck was appointed General-in-Chief of all the armies of the United States, and reached Washington in the latter part of the month to assume control. It was not an unimportant consideration that thenceforth generals of armies in the field would receive their orders from a professional soldier, ranking them, and not from a "civilian" of any grade whatever.

It is easy to overlook or belittle the practical statesmanship displayed in the creation of such an office as that to which General Halleck was appointed. The "statute laws" of the land made no mention of it, and the appointment carried with it no permanent promotion or increase of pay. The "General-in-Chief" had a thankless task before him: almost as much so as had the Secretary of War. Victories won would surely give all their glory to the generals in immediate command of the forces winning them. Sore-hearted men in search of scapegoats for the blame of defeats and failures would continually have one prepared and named for them at the right hand of the President at Washington. He would receive small credit for good advice, and his powers for preventing mischief were limited on every side in spite of his sounding title. This was strikingly exemplified by the results of the Fredericksburg campaign, undertaken against his counsel, lost as he expected, and much of the blame of it cast upon his head by a host of uninformed faultfinders.

It was of the last importance to the stability of the Administration that the tides of sure disappointment and discontent should rise and dash and be dissipated against such breakwaters as Stanton and Halleck and not be permitted to assail injuriously the one man whose personal hold upon the popular heart and confidence was vital to the existence of the nation. Stu-

dents of the Constitution of the British Empire may possibly find an analogy there by looking for it.

It may fairly be said that the close of the summer of 1862 found Mr. Lincoln's official staff, for the first time, fully prepared to deal with the work before him and them. Surely a year and a half was no excessive length of time for the accomplishment of so great a feat of wisdom in selection. He had done well with such materials as he had within his reach in the beginning. It is not easy to see how he could have done better. Now, at last, he was efficiently provided, but before him opened gloomily "the dark days" of the war. The prospect or hope of a speedy collapse of the Rebellion had disappeared, and, for the moment, the Nation stood upon the defensive.

## CHAPTER XL.

## DRAWN BATTLES.

The Fighting under Pope—News from the Army—The Changes of Commanders—Lee in Maryland—The Antietam—Exhausted Patience—Removal of McClellan—A Great Misunderstanding.

THE position of the Army of the Potomac during the last week of August, 1862, and the days next following, called for the exercise of uncommon firmness and discretion.

General McClellan arrived from Harrison's Landing on the 24th of August, and reported to General Halleck for orders. On the 27th he removed his quarters from Acquia Creek to Alexandria, and was assigned to the duty of forwarding troops to General Pope. It was a time of universal gloom and deep excitement. The tongues of rumor, detraction, of every kind of bitterness, were so busy with all the questions of the hour that it was impossible to sift the true from the false or even what purported to be "evidence." This difficulty was seriously complicated by the practical untrustworthiness of any dispatches. The general in command had done his duty and knew it, and his despatches expressed his indomitable courage and confidence much more accurately than they did the condition of the army or the results of recent battles.

On the 30th of August was fought the battle of Manassas (commonly called the Second Battle of Bull Run); and the Battle of Chantilly, which followed, may be regarded as part of it so far as the effect upon the army or people is concerned. A part of the army had behaved badly and was demoralized, but only a part. It was unfortunate that the country at large and the soldiers out of the fight obtained a first and lasting impres-

sion of the fighting under Pope from stragglers of broken regiments reporting to newspaper correspondents. More was lost in this way than could easily be remedied. General Pope himself reported of the Bull Run affair: "The troops are in good heart and marched off the field without the least hurry or confusion. Their conduct was very fine. . . . The enemy is badly whipped, and we shall do well enough. I think this army entitled to the gratitude of the country."

General Halleck was inclined to take the same view of the matter, and said to General Pope, "You have done nobly."

So he had. And the more carefully the records of that short campaign are searched, the better is the figure cut by its general, with some reservations as to his use of the pen. He seems to have been unaware of the feeling and opinion existing among some of his subordinates. So was General Halleck, for a few days. But no such blindness troubled Mr. Lincoln. The President had heard from the Army in many ways, and even from an informal council of war of its corps and division commanders.

There was something almost dramatic about that "council" and its consequences. Immediately after the Second Battle of Bull Run, a call was made upon the civil employees of the Washington Departments for volunteers to go over into Virginia and aid in caring for the wounded. Many went; and among them was a brother of one of the President's secretaries. This young man was met upon the field by a corps commander whom he knew, and was at once taken to the headquarters of another corps commander. Other well-known officers were present or were sent for. They came, they remained a longer or shorter time, they conversed freely and went away. The young man was directed to note down every name and every statement of opinion given, but not to be understood as doing anything of the kind. It was a strictly confidential interchange of military views of the situation, and some of the expressions were quite strong and marked by individualities. At

the close, the corps commander remarked to his young friend : " We could not send all that in a dispatch to Washington ; but the quicker it is repeated to the President, the better for the army and the country."

Means of rapid transportation were at once provided, and the next morning the weary, muddy, and, from his services among the wounded, somewhat bloodstained young man was closeted first with Mr. Lincoln and then with General Halleck and Mr. Stanton. The details of his report were never made public : but Mr. Lincoln had heard from the army. He had the unanimous though unofficial and entirely free opinion of a dozen of its best officers, perhaps of a score, that it could no longer be successfully handled by General Pope, with the added assurance that these men spoke for large numbers of their companions of all grades and arms. Of the officers who constituted that informal but important council of war, some knew not at all that they were members of it, but more spoke with a full understanding and spoke directly for the purposes in hand. The greater number of them are dead, and so is their messenger, and so are all the men to whom he delivered his message. The effect was instantaneous, as may be seen by a comparison of dates. The President obviously had but one duty to perform, and he performed it without hesitation. General Pope was not formally removed, but he literally drifted out of the command as General McClellan drifted back into it. The Army of Virginia quietly ceased to be, and the Army of the Potomac set out at once for the battle-fields of South Mountain and the Antietam. Glad enough would Mr. Lincoln have been, and well would it have been for the country, if he could on many another emergency have listened to a full and unreserved expression of the views of men holding corresponding positions in that and other armies ; but the rules of the service, and the rigid requirements of military etiquette, and the impossibility of providing ways of access to himself, were all prohibitory.

It was true, as General Pope had reported, that the army as a whole was in good heart and good condition. He might well feel personally hurt and injured that it should so drift out from under him. General McClellan was again in command from and after September 2d. On the 3d he had in his hands information which convinced him of General Lee's intention to cross the upper Potomac into Maryland. It was necessary that he should move at once, establishing his relations with the forces under his command while on the march. This is the process commonly spoken of as his reorganization of the army.

The movement of the Confederate troops across the Potomac began at Leesburg between the 4th and 5th of September. Beyond all question they and their leaders believed that they had come to stay. They had exaggerated ideas of the injuries they had inflicted upon the Army of the Potomac and the forces under Pope. Still more erroneous was their conception of the state of public opinion in Maryland. Wilder and more frantic still were their ideas of the condition of affairs at the North and of the relations of what they called "the Lincoln despotism" to the masses of the people. In one point only were they entirely correct. A series of victories in Maryland over the Union armies would undoubtedly have converted their dreams into something very like realities. The stake was tremendous, and it was played for with all the boldness of exulting self-confidence, with the full consciousness of courage and ability, with the deliberate purpose of fighting superior numbers, and the expectation of beating them if those superior numbers could at all be induced to face them upon the field of battle. It is at least apparently true, also, that they were misled as to the whereabouts of a considerable part of their old antagonists of the peninsular battle-grounds.

General McClellan moved very slowly, but the Confederate commanders were pushing their invasion with tremendous vigor. On the 15th of September, without any battle at all, they captured the entire Union force aimlessly permitted to



remain at Harper's Ferry, of about 11,000 men, with 73 pieces of artillery and with valuable material of small arms and stores. No military critic has ever discovered a good excuse for this blunder, and Mr. Lincoln could find none at the time. Accompanying the news of the loss at Harper's Ferry were General McClellan's reports of a brace of severe engagements at South Mountain, commonly described as the battle of that name. About 30,000 Confederates were driven out of good positions after a hard fight. The nature of the ground prevented concentration of the troops on either side or the effective use of superior numbers, but no high degree of "generalship" was exhibited. As usual, the Rebels claimed a "victory," but it was not of the kind it would be necessary for them to win if they desired to make a long visit in Maryland. It was also claimed by General McClellan as a victory; and so it was, for he had not been defeated; but it was not what it should have been, and it prepared the way for the greater failure immediately to follow.

The 15th and 16th of September, after the victory of South Mountain, did not contain much pursuing of the vanquished enemy, but on the 17th was fought the really terrible battle of the Antietam Creek. It was not at all a well-managed fight, but it was splendidly contested by the armies on either side. The Union forces engaged had somewhat the advantage of numbers, as the rebels had of position. The former would have had a greater numerical advantage if their commander had made a proper use of them. That he did not do so enabled General Lee to extract a "drawn battle" from the jaws of what should have been a destructive defeat. He was then permitted to march away into Virginia unmolested. Not all the urgency brought to bear upon General McClellan by Mr. Lincoln could induce him to interfere with the movements of the enemy he had so thoroughly shattered, although he could have done so with troops who had not been under fire and were fresh.

The patience of Mr. Lincoln was once more exhausted by

the short history of McClellan's new command of the Army of the Potomac. Too much had been wasted of men and materials and precious opportunities. Too many costly advantages had been thrown away, and too many orders recklessly disregarded. The remaining days of September and the whole of October were indeed consumed in unavailing efforts to drive him forward, while a force of Rebel cavalry under Stuart dashed across the Potomac and derisively rode all around him.

On the 26th of October he began at last to move his army across the river. It was all over by the 2d of November; but McClellan was still in doubt as to what he should do with it afterwards, and, on the 7th of November, he was finally relieved of his command. General Ambrose E. Burnside was named as his successor.

It is manifest from the record that the latter general was selected from among a dozen officers of nearly equal fame, because he was in some respects the least objectionable and had already held, with good success, an independent military command in North Carolina.

It seems hardly necessary to say, but to some it may be so, that Mr. Lincoln would not have removed General McClellan for other than strictly military reasons. In fact, without such reasons, clearly so marked out as to be read by all unprejudiced observers, it would not have been politically safe to do so. Even as it was, the removal was both politically dangerous and politically necessary.

General McClellan was already the representative of pro-slavery Unionism at the North, and of all the forms of discontent which were willing to co-operate with it. His mistakes were his own. If he had obeyed Mr. Lincoln's urgency and consented to win a few more victories, or had made good use of such as were forced upon him, he could not have been set aside without assuring him an overwhelming triumph at the following Presidential election. Had he been left in command, there is reason to doubt if the course of events would

not have been such that the destruction of slavery for which Mr. Lincoln was preparing would have been out of the question.

There is a sense, not hard to find, in which the removal of General McClellan is a part of the Proclamation of Emancipation which followed later. All antislavery men understood it as a telling blow at their political opponents, as well as a thing done for the good of the army and of the Union cause. It sent a shock even through the minds of Southern leaders, for they well understood the divisions of public sentiment at the North. They were by no means as blind as were their followers to the swift changes of opinion concerning them and their cherished institution. They knew what this meant, and it was as if they had lost a battle.

It may almost be said that General McClellan deserved the thanks of his country for giving the President good military reasons for making a removal so eminently desirable politically.

At the North, at the time, multitudes received the news with a storm of angry execrations. As they understood the matter, a great general unjustly put aside had generously come to the rescue at a critical moment. He had rallied and reorganized a ruined army, and with it had won tremendous victories, and had delivered his country from invasion if not from conquest. It is for many to this day impossible to grasp the situation as it was, or to regard such a setting forth as has been made above as other than grossly partisan. They cannot be made to believe that at the battle of the Antietam McClellan had at his disposal at least twice as many men as had Lee, all every inch as good soldiers as his, as well equipped, as full of fight and enthusiasm, and that yet Lee actually fought with about equal numbers, the rest of McClellan's army not fighting at all. They are blind to the simple facts of the drawn battle, and the unhindered escape, and the non-employment of forces in hand.

## CHAPTER XLI.

## EMANCIPATION.

The War-Power and the Constitution.—A Struggle of Life and Death—  
The Hour and the Man—The Proclamation—Waiting for a Victory—  
An Unprepared People—Suspension of the Writ of Habeas Corpus—  
Visiting the Army—The Reply of the Opposition.

It is necessary at this point to recall with care the record of Mr. Lincoln as a life-long enemy of human slavery, and to understand fully the position he was forced to occupy regarding it.

In the year 1850 he said to his friend Mr. Stuart: "The time will come when we must all be Democrats or Abolitionists. When that time comes, my mind is made up." In his great speech at Bloomington, Illinois in 1858, he said: "I believe this government cannot endure permanently, half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved,—I do not expect the house to fall,—but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing or all the other."

In the private conversation, as in the public utterance, he clearly expressed a conviction which had become a part of his life. That conviction could not have been taken from him by any possible course of events or power of argument. From the date of the Bloomington speech, and from hour to hour, the course of events did but deepen as they justified the sure processes of his reason and their unchanged conclusion.

Before the war began, he saw, as did many other men, that a success of the secession conspiracy and a division of the national territory meant more than the triumph and permanence of human slavery in the Southern Confederacy. It meant also

a perpetual predominance of proslavery influence in the nominally Free North. That influence was already so strong there as to threaten the stability of an openly Abolition Administration. Its power was made to be felt even in strictly military matters from the beginning. Mr. Lincoln found it grappling with him for the mastery and assailing him in every imaginable disguise.

The fact grew plainer to the minds of all men, as the strife went on, that the institution of slavery was the real prize for which the armies were contending. Still, time was required to so fix and confirm the hearts and minds of the great majority that they could endure to have their secret convictions formulated and proclaimed.

Mr. Lincoln understood the people very well. He was a sort of revolutionary dictator. He was ready and willing to use all powers given him by his unwritten commission to "See to it that the Commonwealth suffers no harm." He was also a Constitutional President, under an oath to protect the rights of all citizens of every part of the country. If he were not President of the South, he had no right to send troops there, to restore order and enforce his authority. The people of the seceded States were still his fellow-citizens, or it would have been idle to call them "rebels." Against them he cherished no atom of merely personal animosity, and he was destitute of mere sectional prejudices. His course cannot be at all understood by any man who narrowly imagines him as thinking only of his duties to the populations within the Union army lines.

In his inaugural address, he said: "I have no purpose, directly or indirectly, to interfere with the institution of slavery in the States where it exists. I believe I have no lawful right to do so, and I have no inclination to do so." And, speaking as if to the people of the South: "You can have no conflict without being yourselves the aggressors: we are not enemies, but friends."

They insisted on becoming his enemies; but he continued to be their friend to the end, even while resisting to the uttermost the aggressors who demanded and compelled conflict when he pleaded for peace.

No change of any consequence was made, or could be made, constitutionally, in the written law of the land respecting slavery. Mr. Lincoln's mind underwent no change as to his view of his "lawful right" thence derived. Any such right must therefore come to him in another way; but he steadily and thoughtfully prepared himself to exercise it in the hour of its coming.

At the time of Frémont's premature "proclamation" no law or lawful right had as yet been created. The power to set aside written law was inherent in the "dictatorship," but could come even to the dictator only from the hand of necessity and for the safety of the life of the Commonwealth. It was not personal to Mr. Lincoln, or, through or without him, to any of his subordinate officers.

That slavery must die or that the Commonwealth must die became gradually but more and more plainly manifest. It was also plain that the death of the public enemy must be by the hands of the war power and as a military execution, without waiting for the slow and doubtful processes of civil procedure. The remaining questions related only to the time and manner of an act so important. On the 13th of March and on the 16th of July, 1862, Mr. Lincoln had approved and signed Acts of Congress the effect of which was to give due form of law to General B. F. Butler's doctrine that all slaves of rebels in arms were "contraband of war." These Acts, with a little help, would have proved fatal to the institution in due time; but they dealt with individuals and not with geographical areas or entire communities, and were subject to Congressional action in repeal or modification. They did much towards preparing the way for better things, however, and the President wisely embodied them in his first proclamation. He thereby absorbed



in and united with his own action as Dictator and President the previous action of the legislative branch of the government. Members of Congress were enabled to say to each other, "The Commander-in-Chief has issued a general order embodying and enforcing our legislation."

The "general order" contained and enforced such amplifications as rendered the Dictatorial Proclamation forever independent of the Legislative Act.

That the view here taken may not be deemed strained or overwrought, it is best to condense it into Mr. Lincoln's own words. In a letter dated April 4, 1864, written to Mr. George C. Hodges, of Frankfort, Kentucky, he says:

"I felt that measures otherwise unconstitutional might become lawful by becoming indispensable to the preservation of the Constitution, through the preservation of the Nation. When, early in the war, General Frémont attempted military emancipation, I forbade it, because I did not then think it an indispensable necessity. When, a little later, General Cameron, then Secretary of War, suggested the arming of the blacks, I objected, because I did not yet think the indispensable necessity had come."

Through these few sentences the whole course of his mental operations may be unerringly traced.

The hour he waited for came at last, and his action came with it. The deed itself, and all the manner of its doing, bring out in striking illustration the inner life of the man. It sets forth once more his lifelong characteristic of foresight and previous preparation, that so delivered him from ruinous surprises. Even as he had patiently waited for the Rebellion, knowing that it would surely come, so he now waited for the hour of the Emancipation Proclamation, with faith in God that it also would come.

In the summer of 1862 he prepared a draft of the important document. At about the last of July or the first of August he called a full meeting of his Cabinet. The members

of it had no information of the reason of their coming together, and Mr. Lincoln seemed in no hurry to give them any. They were eminently representative men, and he knew that by the effect upon them of the paper he was about to read to them he could fairly judge its probable effect upon the nation. He was not yet prepared, mentally, for the struggle before him. He even trifled for a few minutes, internally steadying his own powers and gauging the status of the sober statesmen around him. He read to them a chapter of a book by "Orpheus C. Kerr," and heartily laughed at its drolleries. No man among them was aware of, or could penetrate, the depths of thought and emotion, or discern the gathering strength of will, behind that laugh. The seemingly frivolous delay had unseen uses; but the members of the Cabinet looked at one another with a growing sense that their personal dignity was in peril. All cause for such nervousness disappeared when that of the President himself had been removed and he had adjusted himself to his task.

His demeanor suddenly underwent a change. The amused humorist vanished. In his place was a man who had reached a new grandeur of moral elevation to which he was profoundly anxious to raise each soul among them. He announced his purpose and read the paper which he had prepared. He stated, in good set terms, that he had not called them together to ask their advice, but to lay the subject-matter of a proclamation before them, suggestions as to which would be in order after they had heard it read. It was not so much for general consultation, therefore, as to finally announce a settled purpose and to receive counsel on minor points.

There is no accurate report of the debate which followed, but the scene itself is pictorially presented, with an extreme of careful exactness, in the painting by Mr. F. B. Carpenter, preserved in the Capitol at Washington. Mr. Chase, it is said, wished the language made stronger with reference to the arming of the blacks, not perceiving that the emergency was al-

ready loaded to the very limits of its power to endure. Mr. Blair opposed the proclamation on the ground that it would cost the Administration the fall elections, not seeing that the gift of freedom to the slave opened a perpetual fountain of popular support. Other remarks were made; but little seems to have been effectively said until Mr. Seward spoke, as a statesman comprehending the effect of a measure so fully in accord with the tenor of his own life and work:

“Mr. President, I approve of the proclamation, but I question the expediency of its issue at this juncture. The depression of the public mind, consequent upon our repeated reverses, is so great that I fear the effect of so important a step. It may be viewed as the last measure of an exhausted government—a cry for help—the government stretching out its hands to Ethiopia, instead of Ethiopia stretching out its hands to the government.” (Mr. Carpenter relates that Mr. Lincoln himself said, “His idea was that it would be considered our last shriek on the retreat.”) Mr. Seward added that, in his opinion, the publication of the proclamation should be delayed until it could follow some notable military success. The advice of the Secretary of State was undeniably sound, and Mr. Lincoln followed it. Quite likely the precise idea expressed by Mr. Seward was already in his mind.

The Army of Virginia, under Pope, was at that time confronting the Rebels under Lee. A victory sufficient for the purpose might come any day. The President patiently waited for one; but none came. The dark days of August closed with the Second Bull Run and Chantilly. Then McClellan was once more in command, but he was no emancipationist.

The condition of Mr. Lincoln's mind, during those terrible days of enforced waiting, may be learned from his subsequent action and from his own account. He stated to Mr. F. B. Carpenter, the artist of the picture of the “First Reading:”

“When Lee came over the river, I made a resolve that when McClellan should drive him back,—and I expected he would

do it, some time or other,—I would send the proclamation after him. I worked upon it and got it pretty much prepared. The battle of Antietam was fought on Wednesday, but I could not find out till Saturday whether we had really won a victory or not. It was too late to issue the proclamation that week, and I dressed it over a little, on Sunday and on Monday I gave it to them. The fact is, I never thought of the meeting of the governors at Altoona, and I can hardly remember that I knew anything about it.”

The latter clause refers to a conference of the War Governors, as they were called, of several of the free States, to confer as to the condition of public affairs, which by some had been supposed to have influenced the action of the President.

A Cabinet meeting was held on the Saturday following the battle of the Antietam. There had been no great victory, in one sense; but there had in another, for the army under Lee was defeated by its hard-earned “drawn battle” so completely that its campaign of invasion was ended and it had leisurely recrossed the Potomac.

The members of the Cabinet were summoned, as before, not to give advice but to hear a decision. Mr. Lincoln told them that the time for delay or hesitation had gone by, and that Emancipation must now be made the declared policy of the Administration. Public sentiment would now sustain it. A strong and outspoken popular voice openly demanded it, and the demand came from the best friends of the government.

That was not all. In a low voice, and reverently, Mr. Lincoln added: “And I have promised my God that I will do it.”

Mr. Chase, who sat nearest him, heard but indistinctly the low-voiced utterance, and inquired:

“Did I understand you correctly, Mr. President?”

Mr. Lincoln replied:

“I made a solemn vow, before God, that, if General Lee should be driven back from Pennsylvania, I would crown the result by the declaration of freedom to the slaves.”

The proclamation was issued on Monday, September 22, 1862, and was as follows:

“I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States of America, and Commander-in-Chief of the army and navy thereof, do hereby proclaim and declare that hereafter, as heretofore, the war will be prosecuted for the object of practically restoring the constitutional relation between the United States and each of the States, and the people thereof, in which States that relation is or may be suspended or disturbed.

“That it is my purpose, upon the next meeting of Congress, to again recommend the adoption of a practical measure tendering pecuniary aid to the free acceptance or rejection of all slave-States, so called, the people whereof may not then be in rebellion against the United States, and which States may then have voluntarily adopted, or thereafter may voluntarily adopt, immediate or gradual abolishment of slavery within their respective limits; and that the effort to colonize persons of African descent, with their consent, upon this continent or elsewhere, with the previously obtained consent of the governments existing there, will be continued.

“That on the first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, all persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward and forever, free; and the Executive Government of the United States, including the military and naval authority thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of such persons, and will do no act or acts to repress such persons, or any of them, in any efforts they may make for their actual freedom.

“That the Executive will, on the first day of January aforesaid, by proclamation, designate the States and parts of States, if any, in which the people thereof respectively shall then be in rebellion against the United States; and the fact that any State, or the people thereof, shall on that day be in good faith

represented in the Congress of the United States, by members chosen thereto at elections wherein a majority of the qualified voters of such State shall have participated, shall, in the absence of strong countervailing testimony, be deemed conclusive evidence that such State, and the people thereof, are not then in rebellion against the United States.

“That attention is hereby called to an Act of Congress, entitled ‘An Act to make an additional Article of War,’ approved March 13, 1862, and which Act is in the words and figures following :

“‘Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That hereafter the following shall be promulgated as an additional article of war, for the government of the army of the United States, and shall be obeyed and observed as such :

“‘Article—All officers or persons in the military or naval service of the United States are prohibited from employing any of the forces under their respective commands for the purpose of returning fugitives from service or labor who may have escaped from any persons to whom service or labor is claimed to be due; and any officer who shall be found guilty by a court-martial of violating this article shall be dismissed from the service.

“‘Sec. 2. And be it further enacted, That this Act shall take effect from and after its passage.’

“Also to the ninth and tenth sections of an Act entitled ‘An Act to suppress insurrection, to punish treason and rebellion, to seize and confiscate property of rebels, and for other purposes,’ approved July 16, 1862, and which sections are in the words and figures following :

“‘Section 9. And be it further enacted, That all slaves of all persons who shall hereafter be engaged in rebellion against the government of the United States, or who shall in any way give aid or comfort thereto, escaping from such persons and taking refuge within the lines of the army; and all slaves captured



from such persons, or deserted by them, and coming under the control of the government of the United States, and all slaves of such persons found *on* [or] being within any place occupied by rebel forces, and afterwards occupied by the forces of the United States, shall be deemed captives of war, and shall be forever free of their servitude and not again held as slaves.

“Section 10. And be it further enacted, That no slave escaping into any State, Territory, or the District of Columbia, from any other State, shall be delivered up, or in any way impeded or hindered of his liberty, except for crime, or some offense against the laws, unless the person claiming said fugitive shall first make oath that the person to whom the labor or service is alleged to be due is his lawful owner, and has not borne arms against the United States in the present rebellion, nor in any way given aid and comfort thereto; and no person engaged in the military or naval service of the United States shall, under any pretense whatever, assume to decide on the validity of the claim of any person to the service or labor of any other person, or surrender up any such person to the claimant, on pain of being dismissed from the service.’

“And I do hereby enjoin upon and order all persons engaged in the military or naval service of the United States to observe, obey, and enforce, within their respective spheres of service, the Act and sections above recited.

“And the Executive will in due time recommend that all citizens of the United States who shall have remained loyal thereto throughout the rebellion shall (upon the restoration of the constitutional relation between the United States and their respective States and people, if that relation shall have been suspended or disturbed) be compensated for all losses by acts of the United States, including the loss of slaves.

“In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

“Done at the city of Washington, this twenty-second day of September, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred

and sixty-two, and of the independence of the United States the eighty-seventh.

[L. s.]

“ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

“By the President :

“WILLIAM H. SEWARD, Secretary of State.”

It was true that a day in the future was named as the date upon which the Executive axe would fall, but all men knew that it was as if the intervening time were already past and that the act of emancipation was final. Neither retraction nor modification was among the possibilities of the future.

It was to be expected that the antislavery elements of the people should welcome with enthusiasm so bold and deadly a stroke at the abomination they hated. They would surely be glad to see the future course of the Administration determined, and they would accept the results as accomplished, for they were generally men of faith.

Not all, indeed ; for a shiver of dread and doubt swept over a large mass of them, and made itself audible in foreboding mutters and dark prophecies.

It was even more a matter of course that the conservative elements would withhold their open approval until the course of events should justify the act. They would require time to recover from the shock of a new idea and to accustom their vision to the glare of a new light.

There were others to be considered in an emergency so tremendous. Mr. Lincoln well knew that the proslavery and all other anti-Administration politicians at the North would instantly be stirred to a white heat of activity. The fall elections were near, and he had before him a struggle on behalf of the Nation. It was not well to confess openly that it was a struggle of life and death. The men with whom he was to contend were every way as dangerous as the armies under Lee with which they were co-operating. But for them, indeed, and hope and aid and comfort from them, the armies under Lee

could never have been gathered in the first place, nor so long have been held together. The main confidence of the Confederacy, at the outset, had been in a divided North. So it remained, in greater or less degree, until near the end; and the fact is recorded in the very localities of the battle-fields of the Antietam and Gettysburg.

Knowing how all the detrimental activities of Northern treason would be stimulated by the declared and open "Abolitionism" of the Administration, it was needful for the latter to put into the hands of its supporters a new and powerful weapon, for prompt use wherever needed. The foe in the rear, as well as the foe in front, must be made to feel the strong grip of the War power.

Mr. Lincoln had prepared yet another proclamation, of temporary effect, but that sounded sternly supplementary of the first. It was a proclamation "suspending the Writ of Habeas Corpus" in all cases of persons arrested, confined, or sentenced by court-martial, as accused or convicted of certain specified classes of offenses, all of which might be included under the general head of "giving aid and comfort to the insurrection." Nominally based upon a clause of the written Constitution, it went so far beyond the provisions of that clause that, in the opinion of many lawyers, it gave good reason for the storm of fierce denunciation with which it was received. Not the Proclamation of Emancipation itself was made the text of so many angry speeches and editorials. The speakers loudly declared that "freedom of speech is destroyed," and the writers that "the liberty of the press is taken away." It was not so easy to convince the hearers or readers of these philippics that the "Despot at Washington" had actually done the deed, as yet. That part of the storm blew itself over until the following winter. It then broke out again in Congress, and there it exhausted itself in speeches and resolutions of a nature which profitably compelled that body to sustain Mr. Lincoln's course most thoroughly, by enacting the necessary and customary

laws in such cases. Congress always caught up with him before the end of a session. It was yet to be discovered how well he was then providing for future emergencies, and how very needful it was that the required provision should be made a good while beforehand.

All this was attended to. But Mr. Lincoln had a matter of especial statesmanship very close at hand. If General McClellan had striven to impress upon him one thing more than another, it had been the politically conservative opinions of the commissioned and non-commissioned officers and rank and file of the Army of the Potomac. He had told the President, in about so many words, that they could not be relied upon or held together for an "Abolition war."

Mr. Lincoln did not believe this setting forth implicitly, for a great part of that army consisted of men who had voted for him in 1860. They surely had not changed their opinions greatly under the influences of the camp and battle-field.

Still it was a matter to be looked into, especially as ominous reports came rapidly in concerning the tone of talk at many representative "mess-tables."

The President was detained in Washington for a week or so by his other duties; but by the first week of October he was with the army, on a long and very sociable visit. The victorious troops were "resting," under McClellan's care, from the fatigues of the Antietam campaign; while Lee's defeated army, not needing so much rest, was busily carrying on the war.

For several days Mr. Lincoln went about among them, freely mingling and conversing with officers and men. Everywhere he was received with enthusiasm, and often with tokens of strong affection. At no point or place or in any part of any command could he detect perceptible signs of disaffection. Such moderate ebullitions of prejudices as were now mere "political reminiscences" had pretty nearly subsided by the end of that week. Had the talk among the true-hearted soldiers, around their camp-fires, been even louder than it was,

the President's visit would have sufficed to restore a better state of mind.

All political and other perils were freely discussed by Mr. Lincoln with McClellan himself, and very effectively. On the 6th of October the former returned to Washington. On the very next day the latter issued a "general order" reminding the officers and men of his command of their duty to the civil authorities. It was also, in effect, a sharp suggestion and reminder that they were dissatisfied with the political attitude of the government which they were defending. The great majority would never have known it if they had not been told, and doubted it even then. He said:

"Discussion by officers and soldiers concerning public measures determined upon and declared by the government, when carried beyond the ordinary temperate and respectful expression of opinion, tends greatly to impair and destroy the discipline and efficiency of the troops by substituting the spirit of political faction for the firm, steady, and earnest support of the authority of the government, which is the highest duty of the American soldier."

It was admirable. It was the precise form of words and sound doctrine he should have meditated upon before penning some of his own dispatches to the President. It sounded well now; but the army and nation somehow perversely paraphrased it so that it did him no good. They made it read: "Fellow-soldiers, you and I are of one mind in this matter. You condemn this accursed Abolition policy as bitterly as I do; but it is our duty to say no more about it than we can help, just now. We must keep our opinions to ourselves."

There was no open fault to be found with such a "general order," but it was really a species of dull reply to the Emancipation Proclamation and the Suspension of the Writ of Habeas Corpus, issued by the military representative of the Opposition.

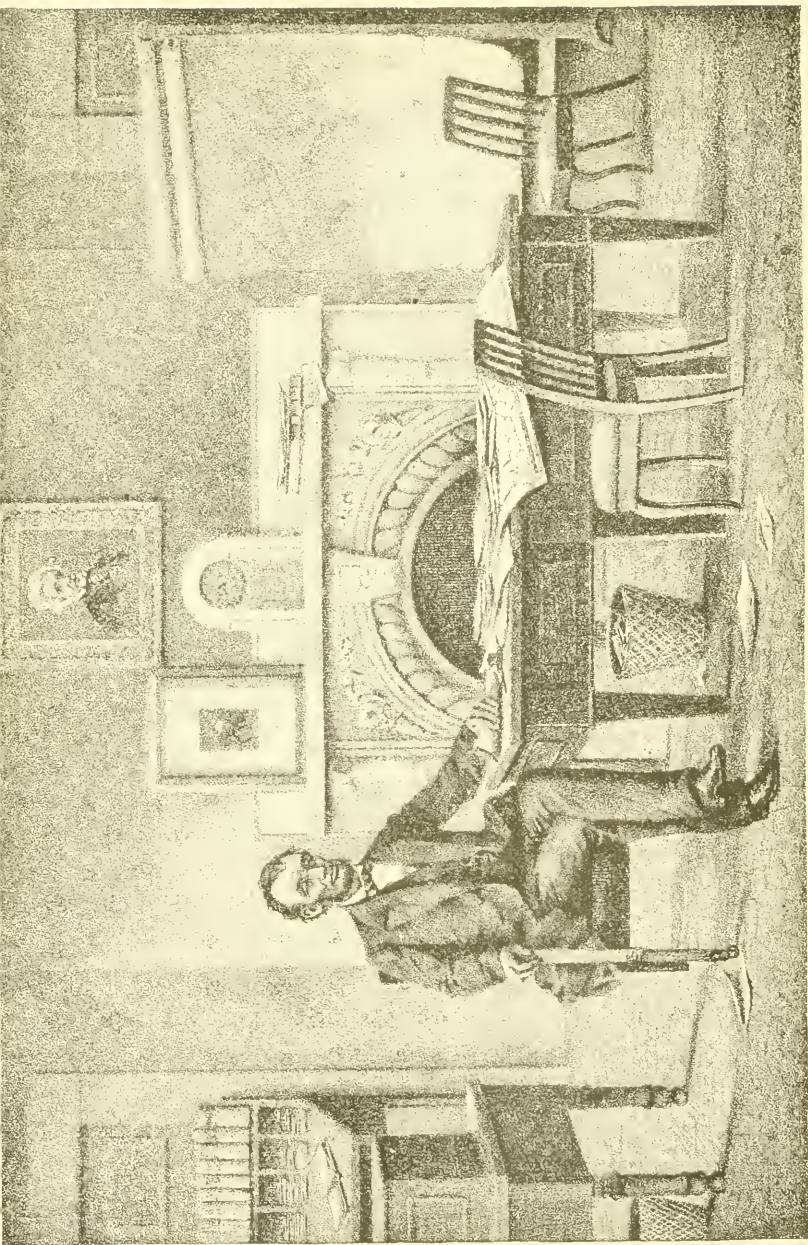
The disloyal elements in the army were so small that the

dismissal of one or two subordinate officers who indulged in mutinous talk furnished an ample corrective. In fact, it now began to dawn upon the minds even of politicians that an army is a great machine, and that Mr. Lincoln had done nothing at all to loosen his strong grasp of the controlling mechanism of the Army of the Potomac.

That of General McClellan had been loosened materially, and a few weeks later it was severed altogether and forever. Not even the soldiers themselves were then aware, at first, how much more close and personal thenceforward would be their relations to the one man whom nobody could remove or transfer, and under whom they served continuously, no matter what subordinate officer of his selection might for the time intervene.







LINCOLN'S WORK-ROOM, IN THE WHITE HOUSE.

## CHAPTER XLII.

## THE HARDEST BLOW.

Home-Life in the White House—Death of Little Willie—Proclamation of Thanksgiving and Prayer—Circular Letter to the Army on Sabbath Keeping—Spiritual Growth.

THE year 1862 was a period of rapid growth for Abraham Lincoln. It was a cup filled to overflowing with trials of every kind and nature.

He was calling upon all the families in the land to send their sons to die upon the many battle-fields of the war, and the responsibility of that sacred but awful duty weighed heavily upon him. He was in the kind of furnace whose fires either harden a man or burn away the dross from the better metal of his composition. It is well to study the process, somewhat, in order to obtain a clearer perception of the result.

There could be but little of home life at the White House. It was the business centre of a vast and growing web of civil and military offices and operations. Nevertheless, it was all the home the President could have. His wife presided over the few apartments reserved for family uses and hospitalities. There were social features attached to the duties of the Executive, but these, for the greater part, assumed a public and official character.

Nearly to the end of the first year of Mr. Lincoln's term, there had been one brightness in and about the rooms and offices which at times gave them almost a home-like look, for his two younger boys came and went, through all of them, at their own childish will. The elder of these children, Willie, was a peculiarly promising boy, and Thomas, or "Tad,"

the younger, was full of merry mischief, the ludicrous effect of which was in no wise lessened by the impediment in his speech whenever he was called to an account. That was not very often, indeed, nor a very serious matter for him or his brother. Tad could explore the garret, discovering the place where all the bell-wires in the house were attached to a central pinion, and could set all bells, and all human answerers of bells, in futile motion. Willie could slit into ribbons the cloth covering of the private secretary's table. Both or either could come and stand by their father's knee, at times, when grave statesmen and pompous generals were presenting to him matters of national or world-wide importance. Such rebukes as might occasionally be administered to them savored very little of "army discipline." They were of more value to their father and to his work than anybody knew, even then. But they were to render a greater and a higher service.

In February, 1862, while Mr. Lincoln was straining every nerve to obtain from General McClellan the forward movement of the army which a discontented people so loudly demanded, the boys were taken sick and little Willie died.

The White House was a gloomy place during the illness of the children, but it was none the less a busy one. All work went on as usual. If the President left his office to visit the sick-room, it was only to return again and meet as before the hourly tribulations of his unrelaxing service of his country. Even the presence of death in the house could not privilege him to remit for one moment his supervision of all the multitudinous life and death intrusted to his care by the people he was ruling.

It is impossible for any man or woman who has never passed through some such trial to grasp and comprehend the inner experiences which surely came to Mr. Lincoln at that time. A multitude of those who have endured corresponding ordeals will need no other key to the understanding of some of his subsequent utterances.

The good lady who acted as nurse for the little sufferers relates that their father came in, at times, to watch by them, and that on one occasion he walked up and down the room, saying sadly: "This is the hardest trial of my life! Why is it? Why is it?"

It was not merely a selfish expression of petulant sorrow. Just so he was accustomed to walk up and down, in his great Executive work-room, alone, at night, after the news had come of some great battle, whether a victory or defeat. It was late, indeed, when the sound of his slow, heavy, grief-laden footsteps ceased, on the nights after Ball's Bluff, Chancellorsville, and Fredericksburg, and in each case the agonized question upon his lips must have been the same.

To all such questions, when honestly asked, there is an answer, although it may not always be heard at once. A part of it seems to have been sent to Mr. Lincoln through this very lady. Numbers of kind, good people who knew it did their best to send it to him. Dr. J. G. Holland records of her that, after the worst had come and the stroke had fallen, when she told Mr. Lincoln, in conversation, her own story of trial; that she was a widow, all alone, her husband and two children being in heaven; she added that she saw the hand of God in it all, and had never loved Him before her affliction as she had since.

Mr. Lincoln inquired of her: "How is that brought about?"

She replied: "Simply by trusting in God and feeling that He does all things well."

He asked: "Did you submit fully under the first loss?"

Little she may have guessed what memories of suffering were lurking behind the few words of that simple question. She did not know what shattering of the very reason and clouding of the brain of the man before her had resulted from his inability to "submit fully under the first loss." That had been long ago, and she was thinking only of the present. She answered:



"Not wholly ; but as blow came upon blow, and all was taken, I could and did submit, and was very happy."

He responded: "I am glad to hear you say that. Your experience will help me to bear my afflictions." He had determined to imitate her and to fully submit, now blow upon blow had come.

On the morning of the funeral of Willie, he said of the prayers offered for him by the good people all over the land: "I am glad to hear that. I want them to pray for me. I need their prayers."

That to theirs he added his own is also a matter of record: and yet there have been, and perhaps now are, men and women so grossly ignorant of human nature as to suppose that such an effect, so produced upon such a man, and followed by an increasing instead of diminishing attrition of toil and trial, was or could be other than eternally indelible.

A few weeks later, before the grass grew well upon the grave of little Willie, occurred the terrific fighting and slaughter of Shiloh and Corinth, in which victory was wrested from the jaws of defeat at the cost of the sons of thousands of darkened households. It was an occasion for thankfulness, and Mr. Lincoln issued a proclamation of thanksgiving for that and other victories, asking the people to "render thanks to our Heavenly Father for these inestimable blessings."

The thanks were sincere, for the gleams of light from the West were greatly needed in those days of national darkness and depression ; but the lesson of the President's personal trial followed in the plain words which directed those who offered thanks also to "implore spiritual consolation in behalf of all those who have been brought into affliction by the casualties and calamities of civil war."

Not then, perhaps not now, could Southern fathers and mothers accept the idea that he could not possibly have excluded them, in his mental vision of the sufferers who were in need of "spiritual consolation," but they were no more ex-



cluded from his thought than they were from the express terms of the proclamation.

There was little occasion for Mr. Lincoln to express himself upon doctrinal points. His early life and subsequent associations had put it out of his power to examine, approve, and accept any one formulated creed of any one church or sect, even if he had set himself at the task of selection; but his reverence for God and His revealed law continued to increase.

When a delegation of well-meaning gentlemen called upon him to urge, in effect, that no more battles should be fought on Sunday, as so many already had been fought, he could reply, half humorously, that the Rebel commanders would need to be taken into consultation before anything definite could be done in that direction. Nevertheless, on the 16th of November, 1862, he sent out to the soldiers a circular letter which gave his views upon the Sunday question very distinctly. He urged upon them that, "The importance for man and beast of the prescribed weekly rest, the sacred rights of Christian soldiers and sailors, a becoming deference to the best sentiment of a Christian people, and a due regard for the Divine Will, demand that Sunday labor in the army and navy be reduced to the measure of strict necessity." He added, even more strenuously: "The discipline and character of the national forces should not suffer, nor the cause they defend be imperiled, by the profanation of the day or the name of the Most High."

The only escape from the obvious meaning of these and many other similar utterances, as expressions of the operations and condition of Mr. Lincoln's mind at this time, is to roundly charge him with hypocrisy.

This, too, has been done; but the absurdity of the allegation comes out in strong relief when the words he spoke are examined in connection with dates and facts, and particularly when collated with the sad event in his own family.

It is now forever too late to call in question either the fact or

the depth of his religious convictions. It is too late to deny that he again and again made public as well as private profession of his simple faith. Especially is it of no manner of importance for the best of witnesses to testify, "he used to talk, sometimes, kind o' half-way infidel, when I knew him, back in Illinois." The testimony may cheerfully be accepted as honestly given, but it does not bear at all upon the case before the court.

## CHAPTER XLIII.

## THE TRENT AFFAIR.

Two Frontier Posts—Western Successes—A Slice at a Time—Trouble with England—Shortsighted Patriotism—A Message to the English People—Captain Wilkes Promoted—Border State Unionism.

AT the outset of the Rebellion the District of Columbia was as much within the intended boundaries of the Confederacy as was any similar area on the northern line of the State of Tennessee. Maryland was even more nearly ready for secession than Kentucky; and the difficulty of retaining either State in the Union was about the same, and required the operation of competent armed forces as well as prudent statesmanship. Washington city was therefore, in the beginning, a position occupied by the Union troops well within the enemy's lines. Afterwards it became an all-important frontier post.

That the city was occupied or held at all was due to Mr. Lincoln's success in carrying on the war for months before the people generally knew there was one going forward.

A serious aggravation and complication of the difficulties of the situation resulted from this history and locality of the political capital. The minds of men, at home and abroad, became absorbed in watching the fluctuations of the struggle for the capture, at one time, of the city of Washington and, at another, of the almost correspondingly situated city of Richmond. The interest in these campaigns, their advances and retreats, their many and bloody battles, became so deep that equally important contests in other parts of the great field failed to receive the popular attention they merited. Had the importance of successes in the West been better understood by

the people, their depressions over disasters in the East would have been, at times, advantageously diminished.

To the mind of Mr. Lincoln, as to many other minds, civil and military, it was an axiom that the Confederacy must needs be taken possession of, as he curtly expressed it, "a slice at a time." That was the way in which it was done; but it was not always easy to persuade men of the value of the consecutive slices as they were cut off and secured.

In the early days of the war the great State of Missouri was more in doubt as to its political future than was Maryland. Its loss would have entailed consequences every way as disastrous to the Union cause; but the rapid series of movements and successes, beginning with those of General John C. Frémont, which placed it beyond the reach of the Confederate commanders was but moderately appreciated on the Atlantic seaboard and not at all in Europe. It was won and held by achievements of high merit both in statesmanship and arms; and in like manner was the State of Kentucky severed from the hopes of the Confederacy. Subsequent operations were transferred from the Ohio River and the Illinois line of the Mississippi River and the Iowa border, away down to the line of the Cumberland River, and the grand result was accepted by the public very much as if a ripe apple had fallen from a tree. The consecutive apples fell, indeed, but the shaking of the tree began very early in the season and cost the lives of many thousands of brave men.

There was a respectable amount of popular rejoicing when a permanent foothold was won, by the Federal forces under Burnside, on the sea-coast of North Carolina; but the grumbling multitude refused to see that it was of any great importance to the general result.

Even when, in April, 1862, the city of New Orleans, and with it the mouth of the Mississippi River, fell into the hands of the national troops and a fair degree of enthusiasm was kindled, for a moment, nine men out of ten would have tossed

their hats more zealously over the news of a much less fruitful victory on the Potomac.

It was not so with Mr. Lincoln. From first to last he watched the course of events in the West with an interest which never flagged. All that country was familiar ground to him, and he made himself thoroughly master of the peculiar campaigning required for its reduction. He knew the rivers and their variations of flood and fall; the lowlands and the highlands and their roads and lack of roads; more than all, he knew, better than did the Eastern generals and statesmen around him, the peculiar characteristics of the varied populations and how very far they were from being one people.

The civil war was a War for the Union in more ways than one. In all its processes it operated as a national unifier, and Mr. Lincoln aided the processes as best he could. He drew Western soldiers to fight in the Army of the Potomac until he changed materially the originally somewhat sectional composition of that organism. He sent Eastern troops to join in the marches and battles in Kentucky and Tennessee. It was not by any manner of accident that volunteers from widely separated localities found themselves marching up to the guns of the enemy shoulder to shoulder. Even as early as December, 1862, the records show that the Army of the Potomac contained regiments, batteries, or brigades from Wisconsin, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Illinois. At a somewhat later date, the Army of the Cumberland contained, in like manner, distinct organizations from Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Maryland, and Maine. This wise blending of the contingents of the several States continued to the end of the war.

How closely the President watched the military operations in the West appears from his dispatches and correspondence. It is further illustrated by his recognition of the successive achievements of Pope, Halleck, Sherman, Sheridan, Grant, and a long list of other meritorious officers.

His eyes were everywhere; and everywhere the commanders and soldiers, in camp and field, were made conscious of his thoughtful sympathy, and made to feel the eager help with which he urged them to the performance of their duty. He gave them all but his personal presence, and his telegraphic correspondence proves that they almost had that also. Still the records of battles and sieges, in whatever section or locality, belong to the history of the war and not to the "life" of the man.

The year 1862 contained other than military problems for Mr. Lincoln to meet and solve. Our foreign affairs were sufficiently complicated by the almost unconcealed sympathy of England and France with the Jefferson Davis government. Mr. Seward had already established a high reputation as a diplomatist by the skill and vigor with which he had continually parried their expressions of half-angry discontent. The Confederate ruler had it in mind to establish closer relations with these very powers, and with that object sent out two commissioners, duly accredited. These men, named Mason and Slidell, had both been members of the Senate of the United States. Escaping from Charleston to Cuba, they sailed from Havana, on the 7th of November, on the British mail-steamer *Trent*, bound for St. Thomas. On the next day the *Trent* was stopped at sea by the United States war-steamer *San Jacinto*, Captain Wilkes; the two commissioners were taken out of her by force, against the protests of her officers, and carried to the United States to be shut up in Fort Warren.

It was a high-handed proceeding, strongly resembling, in many of its features, the accustomed course of Great Britain in dealing with weaker powers; and the indignation it aroused in the British mind, official and otherwise, was extreme. It was natural that such should be the case; but the tone and manner in which the indignation found expression rendered the task of offering reparation a peculiarly hard one. The path to hostilities was made easy and the path to peace was half shut up.



At the same time Mr. Lincoln's perplexities were multiplied by the state of the public mind at the North. It was exceedingly bitter against England, for it was well understood that her ill offices to us in our hour of trouble had but lamely halted short of open war, and that further evil was sure to come to us from her. Popular patience was nearly exhausted, and, for a moment, the general opinion was plainly and loudly uttered that avowed and regular hostilities could do us little more harm than could the veiled but steady pressure and the secret thrusts of a half-concealed enmity. The capture of the two Rebel emissaries was hailed with an acclaim as boisterous as if Captain Wilkes had won a great sea-fight and had not disturbed the shadowy "law of nations" in the least. He became, in fact, the hero of the hour.

It was necessary, however, that we should have no open quarrel with England, and the law of the matter was sufficiently in her favor to enable the United States to withdraw with dignity, almost in spite of her.

At that juncture of the struggle with the South, a new crisis; British fleets upon the coast; British supplies of money and war material pouring into the ports of the Confederacy without restriction, instead of under serious difficulties; British annoyance of Northern seaports, and the necessity for the immediate conquest of the Canadas by the United States,—would have added terribly to the burdens of the nation. The result to the United States might have been the same, in the long-run; but the "run" would have been longer, and the cost vastly greater. England, indeed, might have been badly crippled; but there would have been loss instead of gain in that, for no sensible American wishes to see her crippled. In fact, it is hard to imagine anything more short-sighted and stupid than the enmity of the then government of England to the cause of the Union. As Mr. Lincoln pointedly remarked to the English people in his next Message to the Congress of the United States, the shortest way out of the commercial diffi-

culties resulting to foreign nations from our civil war was to be found in the prompt suppression rather than in the prolonged maintenance of the Rebellion. It was strictly true; and if England and France suffered losses from the continuance of the war, the responsibility therefor was largely their own. England was practically and very effectively the ally of the South, on land and sea; while the animus of the French Imperial Government, never more than externally courteous, found its most perfect expression at last in its ill-fated Mexican policy, rendered possible only by the fact that the hands of the United States were tied from interfering.

The refusal of Mr. Lincoln to be dragged into a war with England was a bitter disappointment to the Confederacy and to all our other national enemies, and not even the truly admirable management of the matter by the Secretary of State could altogether satisfy the angry patriots who had glorified Captain Wilkes.

The government was roundly and lavishly berated; but the two Rebel commissioners were liberated; and Captain Wilkes was soon promoted.

Mr. Lincoln was under a perpetual pressure from the most sincere and earnest supporters of the government, for these were mostly men of positive minds and strong convictions. They were the very men to make a great nation out of, and they spoke their minds liberally. They could not see all the obstacles in his way, as he saw them, nor was it always safe to explain too fully and minutely what he was doing.

The very existence of some of his most serious hindrances had to be kept to himself. The men were by no means numerous who could have been made to understand the methods pursued with the border-States, and notably with Kentucky. That name and those of Maryland and Missouri and Delaware, and so forth, were but geographical expressions to the great majority. The President, however, was dealing, not with geography and local boundaries, but with men, and their prejudices

and fears and self-interests, and, what was all-important, with their sure changes of opinion.

In the same Message to the Congress above mentioned, he was able to say: "These three States, of Maryland, Kentucky, and Missouri, neither of which would promise a single soldier at the first, have now an aggregate of not less than forty thousand in the field for the Union; while, of their citizens, certainly not more than a third of that number, and they of doubtful whereabouts and doubtful existence, are in arms against it."

## CHAPTER XLIV.

## A DARK WINTER.

Fredericksburg—A Lost Opportunity—Burnside and Hooker—The Burdens of a Military Establishment—Congressional Counselors—The Heart of the Nation—An Extraordinary Ambassador—The Birth of the Union League.

THE year 1862 closed, both for the country and for Mr. Lincoln, in the great grief of the defeat of the Army of the Potomac at Fredericksburg. It was a blow of peculiar severity to the President, for he was made to seem responsible for the movements which led to it and for the mismanaged battle itself. It affected him very deeply, and yet, now that all the facts have been sought out, it is impossible to charge him with any fault in the premises.

That he had earnestly insisted upon active operations was true. He had done that daily, from the outset; but he had not undertaken to direct details; and the inexcusable blunders of the Fredericksburg fight were committed without his knowledge.

The history of the affair had deep lessons in it. By an understanding with General Burnside, General McClellan continued in command until the 9th of November, and the orders for the forward movement were issued by him in person. No change, for a number of days, was made in the plans which he had previously approved. General Halleck had at once called upon General Burnside for a "plan of campaign," and the latter prepared and submitted an abstract of his conception of the situation. This did not meet the approval of the General-in-Chief, and he at once went, in person, to General Burnside's headquarters, at Warrenton, Virginia. Here, on the 12th and

13th of the month, a long conference was held, which resulted in the submission of their separate plans to the President. On the 14th, General Halleck telegraphed to General Burnside Mr. Lincoln's assent to the views of the latter, but with this vital and unmistakable indication, in the express words of the dispatch: "He thinks it [your plan] will succeed if you move rapidly. Otherwise, not."

Nothing could be more plain and definite in the rendering of a military decision. Subsequent investigations justify Mr. Lincoln. If General Burnside had moved rapidly, as he did not, his troops would have been in possession of the very position at Fredericksburg, then unoccupied, from which he afterwards vainly strove to dislodge the iron veterans of General Lee.

The approval of his plan, as submitted, by no means implied that he should permit the best general of the Confederacy, with a recorded force of 78,228 effective men and guns in proportion, to deliberately intrench himself on ground of his own choosing, and then, without any definite plan of battle, to hurl against them, in vague incapacity, column after column of doomed volunteers.

That is about all that can be said of the generalship of the battle of Fredericksburg. The men behaved splendidly. They inflicted sharp losses upon their antagonists. They were sent to do an impossibility, and they failed simply because it was an impossibility; but, for a hurt and disappointed moment, half the nation believed that they had been ordered to the vain effort by a "civilian" President, interfering with and overruling his general in the field.

General Burnside was under no pressure whatever which need have impelled him to the assault of General Lee's position; and there was no good reason, political or military, why the Rebel army should not have been permitted to encamp all winter in those particular intrenchments. If Lee could have been induced to do that very thing, as he surely could not have

been, being a man of uncommon good sense in such matters, the result would have been a greater advantage to the Union arms than had been won upon the banks of the Antietam Creek. The very maintenance of his army was draining the life-blood of the Confederacy, while the resources of the North had hardly as yet been drawn upon. "Active operations" to keep him there would have been grand generalship. Much hard fighting would have been required for such a feat; but all the while the Confederacy would have been bleeding to death, and the Army of the Potomac would not have scored another bloody disaster.

The American people had no experience of what is called "militarism," and had but little actual knowledge of the needless monstrosities which curse the Old World under the guise of "governments." A consequence of this was that a most erroneous impression prevailed, throughout the free States, as to the nature and extent of the sacrifices they had made and as to their remaining capacity for more of the same kind.

Every great nation in Europe is compelled, habitually, year by year, to do all that the North had done, up to that time, except as to the cost of what manufacturing establishments describe as "the plant" of their undertakings. That is, the provision of machinery and appliances and the needful outlays involved in beginnings upon new ground. The waste had been considerable, in many directions, but the growth and prosperity of the community, as a whole, had not been dangerously interfered with. A very different state of things existed at the South, owing to fundamental defects of the Southern social structure.

The battle of Fredericksburg was fought on the 13th of December, just after the assembling of Congress, while Mr. Lincoln was preparing to deal with the most dangerous period of his political administration. It rendered a winter campaign in Virginia an impossibility, and made necessary another change in the command of the Army of the Potomac. Gen-



eral Burnside was relieved and General Joseph Hooker was named in his place.

"Fighting Joe," as his immediate command had delighted to call him, was a tried soldier, but, regarded as a general in charge of a great army, he was necessarily another experiment. Neither the President, nor the army, nor the country at large, was ready to invest him with unlimited confidence as to his fitness for his new and vast responsibilities. He himself was probably the only man in the nation who never for a moment lacked or lost that very unlimited confidence: and there was both good and evil in that trait of his character.

Congress assembled in a perplexed and captious frame of mind. Almost every member was filled to the lips with uttered, or unuttered and unutterable, criticisms upon the policy of the Administration and the management of the war. A steady stream of Senators and Representatives poured into and out of Mr. Lincoln's office at the White House, and their recommendations of their constituents for appointments and promotions were accompanied by statements, more or less frank and positive, of their individual views upon the questions of the day. It is very interesting, now, to discover how unvarying is the testimony borne by all these intelligent and patriotic men to the kindly and considerate reception they met with at the hands of the President. This, too, even when the strength of their convictions or the warmth of their tempers gave their language the tone and form of severe censure. He could afford to take it from such men, and to present, in return his own understanding of the matter. So it came to pass, before long, that his Congressional censors became bound to him by near ties of mutual understanding and respect. A sort of family feeling grew in the hearts of many, unconsciously regarding themselves as watching the control of the common household by a man who oddly combined the functions of a father and an elder brother. As for the people generally, they had become well accustomed to talking, half affectionately, about

“Father Abraham;” but there were not lacking some statesmen who seemed to look upon him rather as somehow a sort of senior partner and business manager of a firm in which they were at least “junior” partners and entitled to a voice in the direction of all its affairs.

Mr. Lincoln did not look upon Congress itself as, in any manner or sense, a “junior partner,” and these perpetual consultations with its individual members enabled him to explain to that body both his past conduct and his future plans quite satisfactorily. The net result was that laws were passed to cover the one and provide for the other, and the proposers of the specific “bills” required for the objects attained continued to their dying days under the impression that the legislation originated with them and not with Mr. Lincoln. This had been the rule from the beginning, and illustrates notably his infallible prescience of the popular will and of its approval or disapproval of any supposable course of action. There was nothing mysterious or magical in this faculty. It is not even difficult to discern its source and the methods of its operation.

Any purpose which any man may put in form, or any act to which he may give his free assent, must be, to a greater or less extent, an expression of his “will.” The will of any man is the resultant of the emotions of what we describe as his heart, guided, although under many interferences, by whatever he may have of reason. If, therefore, Mr. Lincoln had any sufficient gauge or measure of the emotions of the men and women upon whose united wills his power depended, he could then trace with ease the average results of their reasoning processes.

That he continually did this very thing is a matter of record, and has been commented upon as a marvel; but it was nothing of the kind. He possessed an unerring “gauge” in the sea-like depth and breadth and power of his own emotional nature, adjusted as it was to the solemn and mournful earnest-

ness of those days of trial. He suffered with all, and more than each; and he could therefore understand all and be sure how far the popular heart and will would go with him and sustain him in the exercise of power, at any time or in any direction. He accepted, as frankly and unselfishly as it was offered, the growing reverence and love of multitudes. It was to him perfectly natural that they should feel as he did, and should most humanly expect him to feel as they did. So he could talk with women about their sons, and not be at all ashamed to weep a little with them when he could not altogether restrain himself. The tears welled up more and more easily as time went by, and yet they did not often get up further than into the softening tones of his voice or the ever-deepening sadness of his eyes.

Corresponding processes of unformulated interior thought enabled the President to gauge with accuracy the growing bitterness of the "opposition" leaders. He had little time to spend in reading their printed calumnies and vituperations, or even in hearing the reports of them brought him by his friends. Every now and then his angry assailants forced their views upon him, in one form or another. His mails were fairly overflowing with wrathful communications which he never saw; but now and then his eye and ear were gained through other channels.

A representative man of the opposition to the Administration, and peculiarly of that wing of it which had openly sympathized with the Rebellion, was Mr. Fernando Wood, of New York. This was the man who, when mayor of that city, at the outbreak of secession, had publicly advised that the municipality should set up for itself as a "free city," so severing its connection with abolitionism and retaining its commercial relations with the cotton-producing areas of the South. In the latter part of 1862 he addressed to Mr. Lincoln a letter, in which he set forth that he was trustworthily advised that the Southern States would send representatives to the next Con-

gress, provided that a full and general amnesty should permit them to do so.

The trap was neither so well set nor so well baited as it seemed to be, and Mr. Lincoln was not drawn into any blunder. He quietly replied, on the 12th of December, the day before the battle of Fredericksburg, and while he was obviously not superintending, by telegraph or otherwise, the precise movements of the Army. He paid but moderate attention to any part of Mr. Wood's letter, except that which declared his *quasi*-diplomatic position and authority. Of this, he said: "I strongly suspect your information will prove to be groundless; nevertheless I thank you for communicating it to me. Understanding the phrase in the paragraph above quoted [from Mr. Wood's letter], "the Southern States will send representatives to the next Congress,' to be substantially the same as that 'the people of the Southern States would cease resistance, and would re-inaugurate, submit to, and maintain, the national authority, within the limits of such States; under the Constitution of the United States,' I say that in such case the war would cease on the part of the United States; and if, within a reasonable time, a full and general amnesty were necessary to such an end, it would not be withheld."

Mr. Wood strove hard to carry the matter further, and to obtain some kind of authority from the Administration for acting as a go-between and proslavery-Democratic angel of peace; but Mr. Lincoln could not be induced to trust him with the honor of the nation in such a delicate matter. Had he done so, neither the rebels in arms, nor the Union armies, nor the people of the South, nor any part of the people of the North, nor any foreign power on earth, would have failed to conclude and say: "The disasters have done their work. His courage has failed him. He is suing for peace. He has even employed a well-known enemy as an ambassador."

It is true that there was always a large "peace element" at the South; but at no time was it in even momentary power,

and Mr. Lincoln was only too well advised of the increasing rigidity of the military despotism exercised by the Davis government at Richmond. He was now watching it with all the greater solicitude for the reason that he foresaw a necessity for tightening the pressure of the governmental machinery under his own hands.

The disloyal elements in the free States, especially of the populations nearest the army lines, had for some time been taking on a form of which the general public knew but little. Under several names, secret affiliations of "orders," and lodges and memberships, honeycombed the whole country, in communication with corresponding organizations at the South.

To counteract these agencies in some measure, as well as to afford an effective framework to the political forces which were sustaining the Administration and the armies in the field, Mr. Lincoln had silently favored the creation of what was soon known as "The Union League." Secret associations of Union men, both white and black, already existed at the South; but no one of these had succeeded in becoming general. The black men are supposed to have attained a common and general method of mutual recognition and confidence, much more nearly than had the whites. Even as to the former, however, and surely as to the latter, the more effective "Union secret societies" of the South were geographically restricted and localized. It was needful that those of the North should be united under one organization, and that the centre of its control should be at the seat of government.

In the summer of 1862 the nucleus of the League was formed, at Washington, by the selection, rather than the election, of a "Grand Council" of twelve members. By this committee of control agents were sent out in every direction and with great rapidity. Local "councils" were organized in every city and town and village of the North. The most complete political machine ever known took form in the very

heat and pressure of the fall elections, and spread its ramifications further and deeper through all the winter months.

It was not easy for any critic to say that Mr. Lincoln had anything to do with it; but there were those who remarked upon the suspicious fact that the Grand Council was made up of his personal friends and official subordinates, even to the extent that one of his private secretaries was Grand Corresponding Secretary of the entire League.

In this way, and otherwise, every available measure was taken to organize the patriotism of the nation and to maintain its activity. But the President was learning yet another lesson from the Confederacy. The Southern leaders, almost from the beginning, had made the burden of their pitiless exactions fall most heavily upon the parts of their populations which they believed to be least in sympathy with them. The National Government had touched its disaffected citizens only through the equal bearing of taxes payable in money. The awful tax which was payable in human flesh and blood had been borne by the patriots only, of whatever political name or party affiliation.

✓ The men who loved their country most unselfishly were in the army to so great an extent that the consequences were already dangerously manifested at the polls. Should the process go on uncorrected, it might yet affect the balance of power in State governments and in Congress. There were large districts in which the upholders of the government were weak, not only from numerical depletion, but because their best and ablest leaders were in the field with their constituents. Day by day their enemies grew more annoying and defiant. The Union League was a strong arm, indeed; but the situation demanded another weapon, and Mr. Lincoln had planned, and now laid before Congress, a new and strenuously energetic "policy."

*to make his*



## CHAPTER XLV.

## EXECUTION.

Efforts for Compensation to Owners of Slaves—Dreams of Colonization—  
The Future of the African in America—The Final Proclamation—The  
Slave-Owner a Southern Sympathizer.

WHEN Congress assembled in December, 1862, the issuing of the final Proclamation of Emancipation on the approaching New-Year's Day was an already assured result.

Its future effect, so far as the nominally seceded States were concerned, would depend much upon the success of current military operations. The people, however, of the border slave-States, occupied in part or in whole by Union armies, were rapidly becoming aware that the "peculiar institution," among themselves, had received its death-blow. All discontent was deepened and all loyal sentiment was weakened in the minds of the slave-owners of Maryland, Missouri, Delaware, Kentucky, and West Virginia, and all in other States that sympathized with them and respected the Constitutional legality of their human property. By no fault of their own they were losing that which had come to them in strict accordance with the laws of their States and country, and these they were still obeying. They had vested rights which even the hand of revolution and reformation was bound to respect as far as possible. It was true that the proclamation did not include them in its sweeping blow, but there now remained no effective or operative power to keep in bondage any slave, anywhere, who should make an effort for freedom. It was a sense of justice, therefore, quite as much as policy, which led Mr. Lincoln to

urge upon Congress the adoption of a system of compensated emancipation for these areas and for the reimbursement of loyal owners of the prices of slaves set free by the operations of the war. Even at the North such legislation was regarded, very generally, as both wise and just. But the measures proposed were permitted to die.

From an early day, as a follower of Henry Clay, Mr. Lincoln had vaguely entertained the ideas of that statesman with reference to the colonization of the colored population. So long as the mass of it seemed to be doomed to perpetual servitude, the yearly shipment of a few hundreds, or even many thousands, to any other part of the world was little more than a philanthropic experiment, with but moderate possibilities of good or evil. Now, however, in the very act and hour of giving wholesale freedom to millions of the marked race, the problem of their future well-being pressed with increasing force upon the heart and brain of the man who set them free. It was yet a question in his mind whether they could safely be intrusted with the powers and responsibilities of citizenship. He openly stated, even to delegations of black men standing before him in the Executive Mansion, his belief that the black and white races, living in contact, were a mutual detriment to each other. It would not be easy to disprove the correctness of such an opinion from the records of the African in America up to the year 1863, and it could even be fairly well defended from the annals of after-years. In his perplexity, at the time, Mr. Lincoln turned to his old dream of colonization. Fantastic as it was, he clung to it for a while, and until the better conviction forced itself upon him that the Africans had come to America to stay and must be made men of, here and now.

His message to Congress, at this session, did little more than set forth the difficulties he had already discovered in the way of his idea. It is not impossible that he learned something from writing and reading his own statement that the black man refused to go to Liberia or to Hayti, and that there seemed

to be no other patch of the earth's surface upon which he could be securely landed.

Less than two years later, still in the same spirit of thoughtful care for the welfare of the freed black men, he was ready to say, and said, to a personal friend whom he had appointed to an important civil post in one of the seceded States which was first to be reconstructed: "I am glad you are so strongly in favor of giving the colored men the ballot. Do all you can to have it done now. I urge you to push the matter. Once the war is over, the ballot will soon be about all the protection they will have. We must fix it so they can protect themselves. They must have it now, and then it can't be taken away from them."

That was in September, 1864; but he could not have said as much in the winter of 1862-3, even if the belief and purpose had then existed in his mind and will. Emancipation itself, by the act of a "military despotism," was about as heavy a burden as the political fortunes of the Administration were just then able to carry.

It was staggering a little under its accumulated load, for this included the entire military and diplomatic situation; the battles in Virginia; the bad look of the recent fall elections; the necessity of increasing taxes; the reorganization of the national finances; and the imperative need for more men to be expended as soldiers.

On the first of January, 1863, according to his covenant in September, the President issued the final Proclamation of Emancipation, as follows:

"Whereas, on the twenty-second day of September, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-two, a proclamation was issued by the President of the United States, containing, among other things, the following, to wit:

"That on the first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, all persons held as slaves in any State, or designated part of a State, the people

whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free ; and the Executive Government of the United States, including the military and naval authority thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of such persons, and will do no act or acts to repress such persons, or any of them, in any efforts they may make for their actual freedom.

“That the Executive will, on the first day of January aforesaid, by proclamation, designate the States and parts of States, if any, in which the people thereof respectively shall then be in rebellion against the United States ; and the fact that any State or the people thereof shall on that day be in good faith represented in the Congress of the United States, by members chosen thereto at elections wherein a majority of the qualified voters of such State shall have participated, shall, in the absence of strong countervailing testimony, be deemed conclusive evidence that such State, and the people thereof, are not then in rebellion against the United States.’

“Now, therefore, I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, by virtue of the power in me vested as Commander-in-Chief of the army and navy of the United States in time of actual armed rebellion against the authority and government of the United States, and as a fit and necessary war measure for suppressing said rebellion, do, on this first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, and in accordance with my purpose so to do, publicly proclaimed for the full period of one hundred days from the day first above mentioned, order and designate, as the States and parts of States wherein the people thereof respectively are this day in rebellion against the United States, the following, to wit :

“Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana (except the parishes of St. Bernard, Plaquemine, Jefferson, St. John, St. Charles, St. James, Ascension, Assumption, Terre Bonne, Lafourche, St. Marie, St. Martin, and Orleans, including the city of New Orleans),

Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia (except the forty-eight counties designated as West Virginia, and also the counties of Berkely, Accomac, Northampton, Elizabeth City, York, Princess Anne, and Norfolk, including the cities of Norfolk and Portsmouth), and which excepted parts are left precisely as if this proclamation were not issued.

“And, by virtue of the power and for the purposes aforesaid, I do order and declare that all persons held as slaves within said designated States and parts of States are, and henceforward shall be, free; and that the Executive Government of the United States, including the military and naval authorities thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of said persons.

“And I hereby enjoin upon the people so declared to be free, to abstain from all violence, unless in necessary self-defense; and I recommend to them that in all cases, when allowed, they labor faithfully for reasonable wages.

“And I further declare and make known that such persons of suitable condition will be received into the armed service of the United States, to garrison forts, positions, and other places, and to man vessels of all sorts in said service.

“And upon this act, sincerely believed to be an act of justice, warranted by the Constitution, upon military necessity, I invoke the considerate judgment of mankind and the gracious favor of Almighty God.

“In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my name, and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

“Done at the city of Washington, this first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, and of the independence of the United States the eighty-seventh.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

“By the President :

“WILLIAM H. SEWARD, Secretary of State.”

The last door of possible compromise with Slavery was shut and bolted firmly. All men knew that the institution could not be maintained in a few detached States and parts of States. Legislation might or might not provide remedies for these, but the President had done his whole duty by them. Especially is this true in view of the consideration, which so largely affected the course of Congress, that the "loyal" population of the districts in question consisted mainly of those who had no slaves to lose. There were exceptions, many and honorable; but, as a general rule, wherever one found a slaveholder, in those days, he found a person whose heart, if not his open deeds, were with the Southern Confederacy.



## CHAPTER XLVI.

## DARK DAYS.

A Tax Payable in Men—The New Financial System—The States and the Nation—Reconstruction Begun—A Flood of Calumny—Freedom of Speech and of the Press—A Sarcastic Present to the Confederacy—Opposition Taking Form at the North.

THE results of the fall elections had been sufficiently unfavorable to warn so experienced and shrewd a political manager as Mr. Lincoln. It was manifestly needful that the North should be reorganized for war purposes as completely as any army at the end of an exhausting campaign. He had already prepared for the work, and a host of busy and eager hands were co-operating with him. The Union League was spreading fast and wide. It had already accomplished excellent results, and promised still better things in the future. The suspension of the Writ of Habeas Corpus had given a stern and ominous suggestion to the more noisy malcontents; but a measure was now preparing which was to fall with terrific force upon them and their supporters.

No other request made by Mr. Lincoln of Congress for any legislation at any time was ever met with so intense and bitter a partisan opposition as that which was overcome in the passage of the "Draft Act." By this law the entire "militia" of the country, up to that time in the several control of the States as such, was placed in the hands of the Federal Government, as a general fund of fighting humanity. It was to be enrolled under rigid provisions that swept in the whole population supposed to be capable of carrying arms. It was to be drawn upon, *pro rata*, at the will of the Executive, subject only to the

forms prescribed by the law, and without any reference whatever to the political opinions of the human beings drawn or to their readiness to die for their country. Those who were thoroughly willing and ready were so nearly all in the field, at that date, that the "draft" was sure to draw upon the lukewarm, the timid, the unwilling, the men bound by home ties and business cares; and the law contained no clause exempting even the bitterest enemy of the Administration or the most profound admirer of human slavery and of peace-at-any-price.

That such a law, enforced in such a manner, would work great hardships in multitudes of cases was not to be denied, although the Act had been carefully framed to provide for these as well as might be. The power placed in the hands of the President was enormous, but, in order to make it effective, sundry other measures were necessary, of an entirely different character.

During Mr. Lincoln's long experience in the Illinois Legislature, and as a member of the "Long Nine" in that body and an ambitious imitator of De Witt Clinton, he had been made to pass a laborious apprenticeship and course of study in all matters of State debt, National debt, banks both State and National; bank-notes, bankruptcies, credit and losses of credit. He was well trained and prepared to join with the Secretary of the Treasury, Mr. Chase, in devising the ways and means for revolutionizing the finances of the country.

They were sadly in need of a most sweeping revolution; and it came. The long Congressional debates could have but one termination so far as the gross amounts of money to be raised were concerned, and the sums tendered to the Administration were imposingly colossal. Nine hundred millions of six-percent-interest bonds were authorized to be printed and sold—to somebody. Four hundred millions of Treasury notes bearing interest were authorized to be printed and used as money. One hundred and fifty millions of Treasury notes without interest were also authorized; and there is a curious suggestion

of the politician rather than the banker in the simultaneous offering of the two kinds of circulating medium side by side. The first kind remained in circulation until it had earned a few cents' worth of interest, and then it did not circulate any more. Still it helped pay contractors and soldiers, and that was the main thing in those days.

Mr. Lincoln's favorite, of all the financial schemes pushed to conclusion by this Congress, was the National-Bank Act. He advocated it in his message to Congress and in private conversations with his friends. It met so strong an opposition on the floors of House and Senate, from the friends of the existing State-bank systems and from what yet remained of the old-time enmity to a National Bank of any kind, that its fate seemed more than doubtful for a time. Its possible failure was regarded by Mr. Lincoln as a greater disaster than a defeat of the Union arms in the field. At the same time a growing jealousy of Executive interference was strong in either House, and there were limits beyond which even Mr. Lincoln could not safely venture. He did venture to the very verge, nevertheless, and the narrow margin of a majority by which the Act was finally passed was obtained so directly by his personal efforts, unobtrusively as these were made, that the National-Bank system owes to him individually its existence and its usefulness.

This done, a secure market was obtained for a vast mass of the authorized "bonds," and it was not long before every paper dollar in the pocket of every man throughout the country bound him to sustain the credit and solvency of the National Government. The base upon which the Administration stood was suddenly and enormously widened.

Through the entire course of Mr. Lincoln's public acts and utterances, from a time long before the war, can be clearly traced his personal conviction, slowly growing into definite form and ripeness, that the nation as a whole, and the now seceded States in particular, required an intelligent rebuilding.

At this day, looking back, the most shallow student of political history has little difficulty in pointing out the manifest differences between the organism now known as "The United States" and the loose, vague, unhooped, uncemented structure which down to the year 1860 bore the same title upon all maps of the world.

Something analogous to pulling down preceded rebuilding, even at the North. Here, however, the work of renewal had proceeded rapidly. The practical relations of State governments to the central authority had been discovered or created and were daily becoming better and better defined, through processes so sharp and searching that their results were likely to be permanent and unquestionable. The several conditions of the border slave-States had been even more entirely revolutionized, and the legislation procured by Mr. Lincoln of this Congress set the seal of perpetuity upon their renewed existence. During this session of it, moreover, the first wedge was driven home into the seemingly solid mass of the Confederacy, and no power could afterwards withdraw it. The old State of Virginia was permanently divided by the admission to the Union, as an independent State, of what is now West Virginia. Two representatives were also seated in the House from the occupied districts of Louisiana. The Confederate authorities were again duly notified of the fundamental principle upon which the repression of the Rebellion was to be carried on: that every Congressional district securely redeemed from their grasp was to return at once, if it would, to the performance of its functions as a part of the national body, and that the Government knew nothing of "States" as members of a foreign confederacy. It acknowledged the existence of a sedition, a riot, a conspiracy, a powerful organization of armed disturbers of the peace of the Commonwealth, but it recognized nothing more respectable.

There was no other political subject in which Mr. Lincoln took a more active interest, from first to last, than he did in

that of "reconstruction." There were many, at a later day, who accused him of even undue haste in his eagerness to obtain the restoration of local civil governments in every part of the territory conquered.

The natural reaction of public feeling at the North had been plainly indicated even before the fall elections of 1862, and found a stronger expression in them. It was well represented upon the floor of Congress throughout the winter. The completion of the act of Emancipation, on the first day of the new year, the entire course and character of the legislation proposed or accomplished, as well as the outlines and particulars of the military situation, were so successfully misrepresented by the Opposition press, and so mischievously misunderstood by large masses of the people, as to greatly increase the general discontent and strengthen the hands of all enemies of the Administration.

The spring of 1863 found the President well supplied with financial resources and expedients, and with formulated powers for suppressing sedition and for keeping up the armies in the field. It must be said, however, and it was well understood by himself, that not at any other time, before or afterwards, was Mr. Lincoln's hold upon the popular confidence and affection so weak, so very nearly broken.

The strongest and most widely read journals of his own political party were freely and even bitterly criticising his management of the war. All blows fell most heavily upon him, but not a member of his Cabinet escaped aspersion. His very family was attacked, in public and in private, by the most vile and cowardly calumny. Not a few bitter tongues roundly asserted that Mrs. Lincoln herself was in constant correspondence, as a spy, with the chiefs of the Rebellion. Through her they obtained the secrets of the Cabinet and the plans of generals in the field. The insanity of the accusation does not seem to have been considered. It was of no avail that she was as ignorant of Cabinet matters as if she had been in Maine, and

that she did not see enough of her husband to ask his over-weary brain a question of the war. It was equally unimportant, though strictly true, that she refused to open her own private letters, and insisted that all which came to her through the mails should first be opened by one of the President's private secretaries. The absurd and wicked slander refused to die, and it is barely possible that some obtuse or ignorant people accept it as truth to this very day. It probably annoyed her much more than it did Mr. Lincoln, but it serves now as a gauge of the bitterness and unreason with which both men and women assailed the President. It also indicates the bewildered state of mind with which they sought to account for the continued existence of the Rebellion. They were willing to dig for the secret in dark corners, and to find it in the alleged defects and misconducts of Union statesmen and generals rather than to see it in the very magnitude of the task these men and their leader were so heroically performing. Even patriotic and hopeful men seemed unable to comprehend how large a part of that task had already been performed, or how well; while the unpatriotic and the desponding openly asserted that nothing had yet been done but to place the nation, bound hand and foot, in the grasping hands of a despotic and blundering Dictator.

The conductors of the loyal press were not any too considerate of the effect of such words as they saw fit to pen from day to day. There were few who showed any intelligent appreciation of the fact that these persistent attacks upon the Administration were weakening the armies in the field and giving the most valuable aid and comfort to the public enemy.

No similar state of affairs was permitted to cripple the energies of the Jefferson Davis government. No European autocracy holds or ever held its subject populations in the crushing grasp of a more rigid military system than had by this time been perfected at the South. The entire human life within the limits of the Rebellion had been dragooned into an efficient



political unit. No careless utterances of individual opinion, opposed to the cause of Secession, were tolerated in public or in private. Such a thing as an organized and formally represented opposition was unknown. The rope, the bullet, or the prison took the places of all other arguments in answering hostile or too-critical tongues and pens. As a consequence, the amount of general information in circulation among the people was regulated and controllable, and the Confederacy was what is called "unanimous" on all questions relating to the war.

The accomplishment of such an unanimity as that formed no part of Mr. Lincoln's necessities or plans at any time. In the very darkest hours of the year 1863, his severities were of a kind which endangered no life and very little liberty. Even atrocious license, masquerading as "liberty," was but slightly and exceptionally interfered with.

With reference to this, it was really needful that something should be done, over and above notifying friendly journals not to print, for the information of the enemy, the plans and armaments of ships and forts and camps, and the exact disposition and condition and intentions of the forces and commanders. Journalistic enterprise had led them in several instances to do this very thing, and its prohibition was sorely grumbled at, as an invasion of the freedom of the press. A more rigid censorship was rendered unnecessary by the general inaccuracy of most of these reports and a shrewd desire that the Rebel generals might accept them as guides.

Something had to be done, indeed, with the more noisy politicians, and it was difficult to see what or how, until a curious but sufficient "test case" was supplied by the treasonable folly of one weak man, with prominence enough to make him very useful. A member of Congress from Ohio, named Clement L. Vallandigham, a strong pro-slavery Democrat before the war, had, since its outbreak, earned distinction as the most violent assailant of the Administration and its measures that

could be pointed out. It was his pride to be somewhat more of a Rebel than if he had been in command of a Confederate regiment. Up to the spring of 1863, he had been permitted to talk as he would, for the good reason that he had no following worth mentioning, and that he served admirably as a perpetual witness that the Government did not interfere with the freedom of speech. He was now to serve an equally important use of another kind. After doing his best for the Rebellion all the winter, upon the floor of Congress, he went home to Ohio and began a series of public addresses in which he surpassed all previous exhibitions of partisan malice and vituperative capacity.

General Burnside was then in command of the Department of the Ohio, and his patriotism was of the most sterling quality. He had issued an order setting forth that all persons found within the Union army lines who should commit acts for the benefit of the enemy would be tried as spies or as traitors, and, if convicted, would be put to death.

This order plainly included such traitors as Vallandigham; and he not only publicly denounced it on the stump, but urged the people to forcibly resist its execution. The military "order of arrest," which he in this manner courted and asked for, was issued by General Burnside as a matter of course, and the orator was locked up. The next day, May 5, 1863, an application for a writ of *habeas corpus*, in his case, was made to the United States Circuit Court. It was a fine opportunity to test the Constitutionality and effect of the President's suspension of the writ, as well as the authority of the Commander-in-Chief to protect the rear of his army.

The presiding judge, himself a lifelong Democrat, politically, listened to a long argument from the prisoner's counsel; but he sternly refused the writ, stating the law of the matter in a form which made his decision invaluable to the Government. He said: "The legality of the arrest depends upon the necessity for making it, and that is to be determined by the military

commander." He added a good deal of outspoken patriotism and common-sense to his "law," and the subject of arbitrary arrests was cleared of a great part of the rubbish which had been heaped around it. Vallandigham was tried at once by court-martial, and was sentenced to be confined in some fortress. General Burnside approved the finding of the court and named Fort Warren as the place of punishment. But Mr. Lincoln was not disposed to throw away his opportune "example" in that manner. He could express, through him, his hearty contempt for the class of demagogues Vallandigham so perfectly represented. A broad smile swept across the face of the North, and a subdued chuckle went through the people and the army and was heard even at the South, when the sentence of the culprit was read in the newspapers.

The President modified the imprisonment in Fort Warren to an imprisonment within the Rebel lines, and sent the convict down South, with a warning not to return until after the war.

There was a touch of humor in it, but it was the most biting sarcasm ever penned by Abraham Lincoln. Well might the South grumble that it was no sort of "Botany Bay," and had no use for that kind of immigration. The sentence worked a world of good at the North. A host of mere talking men felt that the blow was aimed at them. Quarters in Federal prisons could be given to but few. From such places there might be means of possible escape. There would, at least, be food and raiment there, and safe shelter; but who could guess what horrors might await a poor Northern traitor "beyond the army lines"? The people of the South, themselves, were suspected of having strong notions, here and there, of a man's duty to "go with his State, side with his section, and stand by his own people," and Southern hospitality might curl its haughty lip a little at the Northern renegade sent down to help eat the scanty rations of its soldiery.

Vallandigham got around into Ohio again, before the end of the war; but he had served all the uses that could be made of

him, and no further notoriety was forced upon him by the Government. Even after his expulsion, however, his remarkable usefulness continued for a season. His case and conviction, and the shiver of dread caused thereby to all similar offenders, drew the more virulent elements of the Opposition together, forced them to take public action, and so enabled Mr. Lincoln to answer them before the people, as he could not otherwise have done. Public meetings were at once held, in the larger cities, for general purposes of denunciation of the "Lincoln despotism." These meetings answered well as safety-valves, and also to convince the nation that there was really no interference with freedom of speech. Great men and small men, alike, expressed themselves from these platforms very much as the transported Ohio scapegoat had expressed himself from his platforms, and no hand of Executive tyranny was laid upon them. The meetings were largely and noisily attended, and their managers, without any such intention, afforded Mr. Lincoln the means of measuring, with fair accuracy, the extent, nature, and capacities of the disaffection.

A month after Vallandigham had been bundled across the army lines and received by "his own," the Democratic State Convention of Ohio, representing the disloyal elements of that State, nominated him for Governor of the State, and his law-counsel for Lieutenant-Governor. They also did Mr. Lincoln the favor to send a delegation to him at Washington, to present their view of the case.

They did very rightly. They were by no means bad men. Their action, at that very hour, although they knew it not, was a marvellous expression of their personal confidence in the integrity of the President. They did not know, either, how glad he was of the opportunity they thus gave him to tell the whole country, in his answer to their address: "Your attitude, therefore, encourages desertion, resistance to the Draft, and the like, because it teaches those who incline to desert and to escape the draft to believe it is your purpose to protect them."

To the utterances of a great meeting held at Albany, New York, Mr. Lincoln made a more elaborate reply. It was a peculiarly representative assemblage, and gave him an opportunity to explain to the whole people why he had pursued so lenient a policy from the beginning, and why he had waited for the commission of actual crime, by any and every individual, before employing the strong hand of the law. It also enabled him to ask, of both friends and foes, the practical question :

“Must I shoot a simple-minded soldier-boy who deserts, while I must not touch a hair of the wily agitator who induces him to desert? I think that, in such a case, to silence the agitator and save the boy is not only constitutional, but withal a great mercy.”

There was wind enough stirring to blow away a great deal of unwholesome fog. By the time all the speeches had been made and all the editorials had been printed, the people had read and digested the President's replies. They had also chuckled grimly over “Vallandigham in Dixie,” and had enjoyed the panicky dismay of the demagogues. The beneficial effect was sure and rapid, and a great revulsion of popular feeling set strongly in.

The dark days were by no means shortened. There was more trouble to come. Nevertheless, the President discerned that he could safely employ the exceptional powers placed in his hands, and that all the people would sustain him. The great military events of the year, in due season, completed the work so well begun, and, when her next State election took place, Ohio declared, by the largest majority in her political history, that she preferred a patriot for her governor and had, like Mr. Lincoln, no further use for the kind of men represented by Vallandigham.

## CHAPTER XLVII.

## NIGHT.

Preparing for a Great Struggle—Popular Discontent—Murmurs of Sedition—European Hostilities—Chancellorsville—Bitter Hours for the President—Darkness at the South—Statesmen under a Hallucination—The Second Invasion of the North—Hooker Succeeded by Meade.

MR. LINCOLN did not retain the external equanimity of his earlier days under the galling pressure of the burdens laid upon him in 1863. The goading irritations were too many, and they gave him no rest whatever. The path he was forced to walk in was rugged with lacerating difficulties. To say that he now and then gave way to short-lived fits of petulance is but to admit that he was human. He was keenly conscious of every deficiency, in himself or in his human and other means for performing his vast undertaking, and he could not but worry when things went wrong. More than enough did go wrong, and the few admissions of harassed weariness which escaped him do not deserve especial record.

It was well understood, through many channels of information, that the Confederacy was now preparing to put forth its full and uttermost strength: and this was more than the North would or could be induced to do. There was, indeed, a sort of prophetic hope in the obvious fact that such an exhaustive effort could never be made more than once by the South; but the certainty that it was coming filled the outlook for the military year with promises of bloodshed, and these were speedily and terribly fulfilled. Mr. Lincoln read all these signs and promises, and knew their meaning perfectly. He saw and he felt that a large proportion of the men he was drawing into the



army from their homes and workshops were to be sent, by his orders, to certain and sudden death; and he was not the man to put from him carelessly any of the solemn questions asked of him by such a responsibility.

The cares heaped upon the President by the demands and perils of the military situation were made heavier by the aspect of affairs in several of the loyal States. The murmurs of the opponents of the Draft grew louder daily, as the machinery for its enforcement assumed forms which men could see. It was something new and strange and horrible, even to the minds of many who were genuinely patriotic; for it was a sort of remorseless and unavoidable "direct tax" which could only be paid, in person or by substitute, with the bodies of living men.

There were yet other omens of possible disaster. More emphatic than ever came continual assurances from abroad, official, unofficial, and journalistic, that the sympathies of the great commercial powers and controlling aristocracies of Europe were strongly with the Confederacy. The sympathies of the French Imperial Government assumed their most offensive form in the disastrous history of its Mexican expedition, and the foregone failure of this was a significant prophecy of the subsequent events by means of which the French people regained self-government. Popular good-will in France for the American Republic was without any means for making itself heard or felt in the year 1863.

The "Southern" sympathies of that part of the English nation affected by such leanings were made to be very deeply felt by the American people. We were assailed by them, and in the most hurtful modes, by land and sea. On the sea, by the continuous and often successful efforts of British blockade-runners to enter or leave the Southern ports, and by the ravages of British cruisers, like the *Alabama*, under the Confederate flag; on the land, by the presence, on every battle-field, of British arms and ammunition in rapidly increasing supply. That part of the English nation whose heart and hope instinc-

tively clung to the Free North and its long struggle for Free Labor had attained no other political power than that of suffering patiently, in the year 1863.

Whatever may have been the caste feeling of a part of the German ruling classes, the Germans as a mass were with the North. They bought our national "bonds" liberally, at war-time prices, and in due season they reaped a golden harvest of rich profits thereby.

Alone among the great powers of Europe, Russia was firmly bound to America by the ties of a friendship which bore a strict relation to her undying hatred of France and England. Her vivid memories of the Crimean War were sure guaranties of her active alliance, in case her old enemies should offer her an opportunity to obtain satisfaction for Sevastopol. Her position aided largely in checking any too aggressive an expression of the now half-triumphant malice of her rivals who mistakenly regarded themselves as interested in our political division and destruction.

The State Department was in good hands, and Mr. Seward could safely be intrusted with all diplomatic affairs. The condition and promise of the revenue and the Treasury seemed all that could be reasonably expected. The Navy grew more and more efficient, at sea and on the Western rivers. Secretary Stanton was accomplishing marvels of genius and of sleepless toil in the War Office, burning out in faithful services the fiery energy which led Mr. Lincoln to select him for that tremendous duty.

Congress adjourned and its membership went home. The very air grew hot and dense with expectations of a "battle-summer." The army was in fine condition, East and West. The forces on the line of the Potomac were necessarily somewhat scattered, but they outnumbered, two to one, the forces opposed to them under Lee.

The Army of the Potomac was still, to the perceptions of a large majority of the people, the representative army, by the

successes or failures of which they measured the tides of the war. It was under the command of General Hooker; and the exact condition of the President's mind in relation to this officer cannot be better expressed than by the following letter, on file in the War Department:

EXECUTIVE MANSION,  
WASHINGTON, D. C., January 26, 1863.

*Major-General Hooker.*

GENERAL: I have placed you at the head of the Army of the Potomac. Of course I have done this upon what appear to me to be sufficient reasons, and yet I think it best for you to know that there are some things in regard to which I am not quite satisfied with you. I believe you to be a brave and skillful soldier, which, of course, I like. I also believe you do not mix politics with your profession, in which you are right. You have confidence in yourself, which is a valuable, if not an indispensable, quality. You are ambitious, which, within reasonable bounds, does good rather than harm. But I think that during General Burnside's command of the army you have taken counsel of your ambitions, and thwarted him as much as you could, in which you did a great wrong both to the country and a most meritorious and honorable brother-officer. I have heard, in such a way as to believe it, of your recently saying that both the Army and the Government needed a dictator. Of course it was not for this, but in spite of it, that I have given you a command. Only those generals who gain success can set up as dictators. What I ask of you is military success, and I will risk the dictatorship. The Government will support you to the utmost of its ability, which is neither more nor less than it has done and will do for all commanders. I much fear that the spirit you have aided to infuse into the army, of criticising their commander and withholding confidence from him, will now turn upon you. I shall assist you, as far as I can, to put it down. Neither you nor Napoleon, if he were alive again,

could get any good out of an army while such a spirit prevails in it.

And now, beware of rashness! Beware of rashness! But with energy and sleepless vigilance go forward and give us victories.

Yours very truly,

A. LINCOLN.

General Hooker had succeeded in winning the good-will and confidence of his men, but that was all he was destined to win. Leaving to professional military critics all discussion of the exact strategic methods employed or omitted, it is enough to state the facts as follows :

During the first week in May, 1863, General Hooker so handled several of his best army corps, in what is known as the Battle of Chancellorsville, that the net result to them was a severe defeat. The obstinacy of the fighting and the generally good conduct of the forces engaged appears from the official statements of losses on both sides. The Confederate commander admits a total loss of 13,019, and the Union general of 17,197, and, with these, of the battle-ground.

Mr. Lincoln might well walk the floor of his room, late into the night, after receiving the news of this disaster. One of his private secretaries was detained by unusual pressure of clerical work in an adjoining room. Midnight came ; one o'clock ; two o'clock ; and when, a half-hour later, the young man paused at the head of the stairs, before creeping silently out to go to his own residence, the last sounds he heard were the slow and heavy footfalls of the all but heart-broken ruler. So many more fathers and mothers were looking towards him, reproachfully, between their sobs for their sons. So many more widows were mourning for their husbands and wondering whether their heartache need have come to them if Mr. Lincoln had done, or had not done, something,—they knew not what. He knew that the news would stimulate the hatred in Europe and strengthen all the disaffection at the North. Even loyal

enthusiasts would be deterred from enlisting. The Draft would be denounced more bitterly than ever, as a means of dragging helpless and unwilling men into a shambles of useless butchery.

Other men, in distant corners of the country, could not understand, as did the President, that such a victory as that of Chancellorsville, won at so great a cost to the South, was, in its true and final effect, a damaging blow to the Southern cause. They overlooked the simple arithmetic of the matter and refused to see how hardly General Lee could spare the men he had lost, and that a very few such fights would leave the Rebellion without an army. If General Lee's own records are to be trusted, nearly a fourth part of his movable strength was temporarily or permanently destroyed, while the Union loss, relatively, was but fifteen per cent, instead of twenty-five. One bitter complaint made against General Hooker, indeed, was that he had not employed his men and had kept 37,000 of them out of the fight although they were near enough to have turned the defeat into a victory for him had he but set them free. With excellent show of reason could Mr. Lincoln urge, as he speedily did, that another battle should be sought and fought before the enemy should be given time to recuperate. He urged in vain. There was a man then in training for him, in the West, who had learned that precise lesson of the stern arithmetic of war: but Grant had not arrived, in 1863, and it seemed impossible for the President to enforce his conviction of the truth upon the mind of any commander he had as yet discovered. All the apparent evils of the defeat were therefore permitted to remain, and Secretary Stanton himself is reported to have declared that the darkest hour of the whole war was just after Chancellorsville.

The dark days of the year 1863 were not dark for the North alone. There was trouble in the councils of the Confederacy also; and with it came at times a sickening consciousness of failing strength. The course of military events had not by any

means been uniformly favorable to the South. After a series of bloody engagements, one of their best armies was cooped up in Vicksburg by General Grant, and there seemed to be but small hope that his hold upon it could be broken. Throughout the West the Union lines were steadily drifting Southerly. Not a man could the Rebellion spare to its Western generals from its resources in the East, for here every effort was making to re-enforce General Lee. Unbounded confidence was reposed in him, but it was becoming painfully evident that he must do something much more productive of results than the costly winning of even such victories as that of Chancellorsville.

General Hooker was still in command of the Army of the Potomac, and the opposing forces watched each other zealously. A fierce battle of mutual interrogation as to position and purposes was fought at Brandy Station in the second week of June, but no general engagement was obtained, for various good reasons. The chief of these was, probably, that General Lee did not desire one. He was making all things ready for a second invasion of the North, and more fighting on Southern ground, just then, would but have wasted his war material.

That Lee should make such a Northward movement at all was both a dire necessity and a fatal blunder. It is not altogether fair to place either of these upon the shoulders of so good a general. The great error of the Confederate statesmen concerning the state of public opinion and feeling, as well as of material prosperity, at the North, is by no means easy to understand when their general shrewdness and ability are taken into consideration. They should have known their country and countrymen better than they did. The national resources of the North, always vastly greater than those of the South, had not been perceptibly impaired, and no acre of its area had been either devastated or rent away. As to its population, the out-and-out Vallandighams among them were not fighting men, by any means, as Mr. Lincoln contemptuously illustrated when he sent that person through the lines. Lee was quite welcome



to them all, if he had any use for them. They were, for the greater part, mere political demagogues, who talked themselves into disreputable notoriety, while all the good and strong men of their own "Democratic" party rallied like heroes around the flag of their country. The demagogues had now, indeed, been able to take advantage of a sore-hearted and weary multitude; but experienced political leaders, like Jefferson Davis and his counselors, should have understood, without being told, that the multitudes were loyal and true to their government, at the bottom of all their grumbling. The discontented elements at the North could not be handled, even in the accustomed form of a political party, without the name of a favorite Union general, McClellan, at their head. They must be able to assure themselves and everybody else that they wanted only a more vigorous and successful management of the war and, perhaps, a little less of Abolitionism. All Northern murmurs were heard by Southern political and military managers as conveyed to them by their spies and correspondents, or as expressed in wild exaggeration by "Copperhead" editors of newspapers. The rabid utterances of demagogues, and even the observations of the most cultivated and ignorant foreign tourists, were sent South and interpreted as the sincere expressions of great popular constituencies. The imported riff-raff of great cities was carefully cross-examined, and its mouthings were studied and duly reported as indicating the state of mind of our entire foreign-born citizenship.

It was a direct result of the hallucination thus created that the ineffable mistake of an invasion of the North was repeated. The best army of the South was sent across the fatal border that it might serve as a nucleus for an anticipated rising of all the friends of Secession according to their varieties. It was a splendid army of nearly ninety thousand men, and was fully competent for the conquest proposed, so soon as it should be augmented by a few hundred thousands of Northern malcontents. It was mainly composed of trained veterans, new levies

being retained for other duties, and it look forward confidently to the career of supposed victories before it.

It was not difficult for Lee to elude any possible vigilance of Hooker. A rapid dash by a force thrown forward for the purpose cleared the Shenandoah Valley of Union troops, and then, through the broad highway thus opened, General Lee was pressing on to his mad enterprise before his purpose could be divined.

This was the culminating point of the whole war. The Draft for men had been ordered to take place in July. Murmurs of threatened resistance were ominously rising from many localities, and it was not difficult to connect the Northward march of Lee with possible conspiracies, secretly organized and prepared for co-operative action. That such conspiracies existed was beyond all doubt, although their extent and power for evil was unknown. It was now also certain that Lee would be in Pennsylvania before a single army corps could be thrown across his path.

The President called upon the States of New York, West Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania for 120,000 men, for temporary use ; and it is interesting to note the names of these four States combined in such a call by him. In the excitement of the moment the men came fast enough, but it was not so easy to arm and equip and make a practical use of them. In like manner, at the same time, Mr. Jefferson Davis was calling out every able-bodied man or boy he could arm, to defend Richmond from a counter-attack the movement for which had been instantly ordered by Mr. Lincoln.

General Hooker moved his forces somewhat leisurely, and the result of a diversity of views between him and General Halleck was the offer and acceptance of his resignation and the appointment of General George G. Meade to the command of the Army of the Potomac.

General Meade had previously commanded the Fifth Army Corps and was an officer of tried and acknowledged ability.

He had not attained then, nor did he afterwards establish, a reputation as an exceptionally great commander, but he was in all respects eminently capable and trustworthy, and he was less of an experiment than any previous chief of that army. It never had had less need of a great commander than at that very hour. The subordinate leaders of the Army of the Potomac were now become experienced generals, familiar with their commands and duties, while its veteran soldiers were a body of men that had but one equal on earth, and that was its old antagonist, the Army of Northern Virginia, under Lee. No other large armies then in existence had added to their science and their drill the perfecting processes of so many hard marches and fights. There was a curiously high degree of mutual respect and of emulation between those two armies, for which each had many and most excellent reasons.

## CHAPTER XLVIII.

## THE TURNING POINT.

The Eve of Battle—The Surrender of Vicksburg—The Mississippi River set Free—The Three Days' Fight at Gettysburg—Lee's Retreat—The Situation Changed—The Draft Riots—The New York Mob—The President's Reply to the Unpatriotic Elements.

THE month of June was fast slipping away, and it began to look as if the gates of the North were at last open to the Confederacy. By the 24th the main body of Lee's army was north of the Potomac. On the 27th two of his army corps were at Chambersburg, well up the Cumberland Valley, west of the mountains, while a third occupied Carlisle, within striking distance of Harrisburg, the capital of Pennsylvania. General Hooker had held his old position opposite Washington, with his main body, as late as the 23d; but all doubt as to the safety of that city, for the time being, was now removed, and on the 25th he began to cross the Potomac at Edward's Ferry. From thence he advanced to Frederick, Maryland, and halted, only thirty miles, as the crow flies, from the battle-field of Gettysburg. Here, on the 28th, the change of commanders took place, and General Meade only carried out a previously expressed purpose of his predecessor in at once moving his forces towards the Susquehanna. Omitting all details of military movements as out of place here, it is enough to say that on the evening of June 30 the entire Rebel army was concentrating towards Gettysburg; the Union army lay within little more than a good day's march, and both commanders were fully aware that a great and decisive battle could not be long delayed.

What was only of a little less importance, the entire country was almost equally aware and in waiting. A Rebel force penetrated within sight of Harrisburg. The citizens of Philadelphia found themselves digging trenches and throwing up earthworks for the possible defence of that city. The Governor of Pennsylvania called for 60,000 more men. A sudden and fierce excitement spread like wildfire throughout the North, and a spasm of warlike feeling stirred the hearts of men in every community and neighborhood. The effect was not at all what the Richmond statesmen had counted upon, but it was very much what they should have expected. The presence of Lee in Pennsylvania did all that was necessary to render the Draft endurable and only failed of making it popular. Certain it is that there remained hardly a tithe of the trouble in enforcing it that there might have been but for a vague idea which almost every man unconsciously entertained that he could hear the sound of distant cannonading and possibly of drums.

The President urged forward with all his might the army movement under Meade. He did not neglect the forces in front of Washington nor the insufficient counter-movement towards Richmond. At the same time he stimulated to his uttermost, as his letters and dispatches to the commanding generals testify, the operations he was watching in the West. He pushed forward with increased vigor the now almost completely organized machinery for the enforcement of the Draft. The decisive hour had come, and he proved himself fully equal to all its demands upon him. So did the Army of the Potomac. So did the men in the West, under Grant.

The first week of July, 1863, was crowned with hard-won triumph. The garrison of Vicksburg surrendered to General Grant on the 4th, and so, a few days later, did that of Port Hudson, further down the river. With these was also surrendered the Mississippi River to its mouth. The Confederacy was cleft in twain, never more to be the compact and stubbornly resisting mass which it so long had been. In the East, on the

first day of the month, at Gettysburg, the advanced corps of the armies under Meade and Lee began a struggle as of life and death. At the end of the first day's fighting the advantage was with the Confederates; but all they had won had cost them dearly. All through the hot hours of July 2, and on into the night, the strife continued with a success so varying that the result still trembled in the balance. At night a council of war was held by Meade and his generals, and the corps commanders unanimously voted to stay and fight it out. It is recorded of General W. S. Hancock, in particular, that when his opinion was called for he added to it, in strong language, "The Army of the Potomac has retreated too often." It is a sufficient comment upon the aspect of affairs that the usual and prudent precautions for covering the retreat of the army in case of further disaster were made with special care. The fighting on the third day began with the dawn of light; but before noon its bloody tides were manifestly turning in favor of the Union. It became necessary for Lee to strike a desperate, decisive blow, and he prepared for one which, if it could have succeeded against the preparations made to receive it, would have changed the remaining history of the war. It was begun a little after 3 o'clock P.M., the best troops of the Rebel army, hitherto untouched and fresh, being hurled against the Union centre. They have been estimated at about 18,000 men, under General Pickett, sometimes termed the "Ney of the Confederate armies." It was a grand charge, well planned but for a mistaken idea as to what it was to meet, and it was made magnificently; but it failed in slaughter, rout, and ruin, and its failure terminated the Invasion of the North. The Rebel forces still held the positions to which they had fallen back, but at half past 6 o'clock P.M. they ceased firing. They still held their ground, unassailed, during all the next day; and General Meade's caution in not instantly pressing another general engagement has found able defenders as well as severe critics among military men.



Except on the first day, the actual combatants had not been very unequally matched as to numbers, and then only by the Confederate troops being the more rapidly carried into action. General Meade had under him, first and last, about 82,000 men, not all engaged, while General Lee had about 73,500 actually present for service. The cavalry on either side was about equal in numerical strength, but the Army of the Potomac was largely superior in field-artillery. The severity of the fighting is grimly illustrated by the losses, in killed, wounded, and missing. These are trustworthily reported or estimated at 23,186 for the Army of the Potomac and 22,728 for the Army of Northern Virginia, a difference of 458 men in apparent favor of the Confederacy.

Lee's errand in the North was over, at the end of such a fight, even if it were to be considered, what some of the Confederate leaders actually claimed, "a drawn battle." It was, indeed, nothing of the kind, but a distinctly marked and definite defeat of Lee's army, which only escaped destruction because it was not instantly smitten again.

Fresh troops were pouring forward to re-enforce Meade, and Mr. Lincoln urged him to assume the offensive again at once; but he failed to do so. General Lee was once more permitted, though with better reason than after the Antietam battle, peaceably and all but unmolested to withdraw a shattered though still stubborn and dangerous army and to retreat into Virginia.

This second invasion of the North terminated much more disastrously for the Confederacy than did the mad march which ended at the Antietam. When the results of it were summed up and the great events on the banks of the Mississippi were added to them, it was discovered that the entire military situation had undergone a change. Both in the East and in the West this change was of a nature that was necessarily permanent, and the possible future area of the war was narrower than before. Its tide had unmistakably turned and was ebbing

Southward, however any of its waves might thenceforth advance or recede.

During all the time of the change, nevertheless, and even after its bloody crisis was passed, serious political matters already referred to had demanded the thoughtful attention of the President. The governor, for the time being, of the great State of New York had taken upon himself to be a sort of official mouthpiece for the elements opposed to the enforcement of the Draft of men for the army. He indeed represented them, for by their votes he was in office. It is now impossible to more than guess what might have been the course of such a man, so upheld, if the battle of Gettysburg had ended in a rout of Meade's army, or if Grant, at the same time, had been repulsed before Vicksburg. As it was, and while yet the clouds of uncertainty and dread hung over the battle-fields and hid the coming victories, the many emissaries of the Richmond government, and low demagogues without any other commission than such as their own malice gave them, worked busily and effectively among the more debased and ignorant populations of New York and other great cities. The Draft Act contained an unhappy clause whereby a man could secure exemption through a money payment, and it was easy to represent this as a "rich man's exemption." This provision added materially to the necessarily offensive nature of the law, great as was its real mercy. The promoters of sedition were able so to use it as to touch as with caustic all the sore places of poverty and of class prejudice.

Military events had now accomplished much in the way of checking the growth and preventing the pernicious effect of all this excitement; but the path for mischief to come had been prepared in ways unperceived by Mr. Lincoln. Well as he knew his countrymen generally, he was but little acquainted with the population of New York City. He knew as little of it, in fact, as do nine tenths of its better classes at this day. He was not at all aware how strong, active, and well-armed a

“garrison” it constantly requires in time of peace. He therefore could not estimate how much more numerous and efficient should have been its armed occupancy at such an hour of sure and sore emergency as that of the enforcement of the Draft Act.

The time was one, for him especially, in the intense excitement of whose tremendous events almost any human oversight might well be pardoned ; but the precise error he committed or permitted was full of peril. He allowed the New York State authorities to strip the city of its organized militia in response to his call for temporary troops to check the advance of Lee. They were all sent, but there was little use made of them at Gettysburg. That fighting was hardly the kind of work for militia.

The additional error was then committed of seeming to forget their very existence, and so of not hastening their return to the place where they were needed as guardians of peace and law. It is not easy to imagine how precisely such an emergency could occur again, but it might.

For several generations the city of New York had received from Europe, in addition to all that was good and valuable in human immigration, a steady influx, such as it still receives, of the vilest elements of the worst populations of the Old World. The children of these people do not become Americans, and their very grandchildren, in a large proportion, are still alien in heart and soul to all that distinctively makes and constitutes Americanism.

From these elements had come but few “volunteers” for the army, and nearly as many deserters as volunteers. Upon them, however, the Draft was now about to lay its iron hand ; and the word went around among them that the militia were all gone, they had only the police to deal with, and the city was at their mercy. Their dull brains were slow to grasp the new idea, and the first day of the Draft passed very quietly. This, after several postponements, had been ordered by the

War Department at Washington to take place on Saturday, the 11th of July. It was to be under the purely imaginary protection of a few squads of the Invalid Corps; and the Metropolitan Police were not notified, nor was any request made of them for assistance or even for especial vigilance. They had no expectation of any disturbance, and made no preparation whatever. It was a full week after the battle of Gettysburg, and every militia regiment might as well have been at home. The Metropolitan Police force was an admirable body of men, well organized, well drilled, efficient, self-reliant, and was officered and handled by men of uncommon courage and capacity. It was strong enough, even in numbers, to meet any reasonable demand; but a strain beyond all reason was about to be thrown upon it.

The next day was Sunday, the 12th, and it is a noteworthy fact that the everywhere-present police did not discover or report a single indication of the coming trouble. There were timid people who feared something; there were angry men who made many threats in the ears of sympathizers; the mob was thoroughly ready for it knew not what: but Sunday passed very quietly.

"The Mob." That was a thing, an existence, a feature of the population of the United States, of which Mr. Lincoln had no definite knowledge. Even his old rough neighbors, the "Clary's Grove Boys," were fit to wear wings in comparison with the wild beasts who were now about to astonish him. If he had any thought of possible trouble in the great city, he doubtless believed, with all its good citizens, that the police would be strong enough to prevent any general disturbance of the peace. So they were, and would have been had they not been permitted to be taken utterly by surprise.

On Monday, the 13th, the offices for enrollment and selection opened again, but it was only to close in haste. The Mob rose suddenly and grew fast, compelling accessions to its ranks under pain of death, by a fiercely brutal "draft act" of its own.

It rapidly discovered and assured itself of its power, and the city learned, for the first time, what a multitude of devilish natures it contained. Four days of riot and lawlessness followed. There were twenty-four distinct "fires" of importance within twenty-four hours from the outbreak of the riot, and what was then the "Fire Department" was unfit to deal with them. Too many of its "volunteer" membership were among the rioters, and it was one of the things destroyed by the mob and those fires.

At the first, a pretense was made by the rioters of confining all actual murders committed by them to colored men and women and children, and members of the police force. This, however, was soon abandoned, and any well-dressed or decently behaved man was in peril of being pointed out as "a Lincoln man" of some kind, and of being inhumanly butchered. Stores and houses were broken into and sacked and fired, and the negro orphan-asylum was devilishly destroyed. Plunder, drunkenness, cruelty, held a sort of carnival.

The Metropolitan Police did their duty like heroes, fighting magnificently, under every disadvantage. Beaten and murdered in small squads or singly, they did not lose a single fight, from first to last, where the odds were not more than ten to one against them, or where they could bring a reasonable force to bear. As it was, they held their assailants at bay, checked their ravages, prevented untellable devastation, and finally succeeded in overpowering the Mob. Private citizens armed themselves and came to help, twelve hundred entering the police force as sworn "specials." The guns of government vessels in the harbor were brought to bear at several localities, but could not well be used. The fragmentary remainders of the organized militia came to the assistance of the Metropolitan at the very outset of the riot. The veterans of disbanded "volunteer" regiments rallied promptly at the call of their former commanders and did excellent service. Details of infantry and artillery from the forts in the harbor, and of ma-

rines and sailors from the Navy Yard and from war-vessels in the harbor performed their duty thoroughly. Towards the close, full regiments arrived from the interior of the State, the seat of war and elsewhere, and quiet was at last restored.

The fighting was continuous and bloody. How many of the Mob were actually killed and wounded before its fury was expended and its power broken was never officially reported. There were reasons for not saying too much about it at the time, but the count probably fell little short of fifteen hundred.

Mr. Lincoln was bitterly but unjustly blamed for the occurrence of the Draft Riot. Men saw that its apparent cause and opportunity came from his action as Chief Magistrate of the nation, and many did not look much further. They failed to consider that he was as ignorant as they were that the wild beasts of Europe were so numerous in the dens of New York City.

The good uses of the whole matter were at once developed, and the Draft Riot was of incalculable assistance to the Administration. The entire country, in its amazed perusal of the newspaper accounts of the horror, could see the glare of the burning buildings and hear the brutal roar of the Mob and the shrieks of its helpless victims. The sacking of the negro orphan-asylum, the murder of colored persons, and the other hideous cruelties of the rioters, turned old pro-slavery Democrats, by the thousand, into red-hot Abolitionists. The entire affair, moreover, with all its disgrace and misery, was finally charged over to the account which was to be settled with the Rebellion. Everybody felt that a Draft, or something even more dreadful, ought to be put in operation at once, and that nothing else under heaven was half so bad as a Mob.

The Governor of New York had not distinguished himself, during the riot, by any effort of his to suppress it, but he continued a demand he had made upon the President for a postponement of the Draft, and for sundry modifications of its operation. He even went so far as to ask that the postpone-



ment should be until a test of the constitutionality of the Act should be had before the courts. Mr. Lincoln's reply was, in effect, that he had no objection whatever to having the matter brought before the Supreme Court, but that, in the mean time, the Draft must go on and the ranks of the army must be filled up. He said :

"We are contending with an enemy who, as I understand, drives every able-bodied man he can reach into his ranks, very much as a butcher drives bullocks into a slaughter-pen. No time is wasted, no argument is used. This produces an army which will soon turn upon our now victorious soldiers already in the field, if they shall not be sustained by recruits as they should be."

The immediate action of the Confederate authorities was precisely as described by the President to Governor Seymour. The South called for its last man after the defeat at Gettysburg, and the war went on with a stubbornness of determination unsurpassed in history.

It was not in Mr. Lincoln's nature to withhold his admiration from the ability and courage of the men with whom he was contending. To him, as to any right-minded man, the record of their fruitless daring and misdirected devotion had in it a sort of mournful fascination.

Who can feel other than an emotion of sadness and regret, for instance, in mentally looking down the slope at the Gettysburg fight and seeing Pickett's magnificent columns and lines march on and melt away in that wonderful charge which was, after all, a blunder? And so of many another charge and rally of our gallant but misguided brethren of the now doomed Confederacy.

## CHAPTER XLIX.

## THORNS.

Poisoned Arrows—The Ways of a Workingman—Western Bickerings—An Extraordinary Congress—Presenting the President's Case—Preparing the Political Future—Visitors at the White House—Wearing Away—Unconditional Unionism Portrayed—Voices of Goodwill from Europe—The Gettysburg Speech.

It is well to keep in sight the fact that the bitter opposition to the policy of the Administration had generally assumed the shape of a personal detestation of the President. Hatred has keen eyes, and it made no error in this, for he was "the Administration."

No satire was too pointed, no ridicule too coarse, no calumny too vile, no vituperation too profane, to be hurled at the man whom both American and English journalists did not hesitate to describe as a "gorilla" and as "the Illinois ape." Well might even so respectable an affair as the London *Punch*, after his death, in 1865, print with his obituary its versified and thorough contrition for its course towards him as a man and ruler.\* It is not possible to rightly measure the strength of any man without taking into account all the weights making up the burden he is carrying. It is not pleasant, now, to think of such a man exposed to such foul and cowardly abuse; but he had it all to endure daily, nevertheless.

His personal manner changed but little, and whatever variations came were not caused by any thought or purpose of his own. Any special reserve, or coldness, or sternness, as well as

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\* See Appendix.

any special heartiness in his greetings of men or women, was an outward expression which took care of itself, for he was no actor. From his childhood to his last days, his kindly nature came to the surface in a smile on reaching out his hand to grasp another. He could not help it. A child could stop him and get a pleasant word from him, even if he were on his way to the State Department or the War Office. Some success had been attained by Mrs. Lincoln in her efforts at securing greater care in matters of dress, but the care was almost entirely her own, he merely submitting to occasional new clothes with more docility, including gloves on state occasions. He was a man of too much good sense to despise the minor social proprieties of all sorts, but his head and heart were too full of the larger interests of his position to spare much thought for its formalities. It had not been easy to make him attend regularly to his meals in Springfield, and the difficulty increased in Washington. Towards his immediate subordinates, private secretaries, messengers, and other officials or servants, it may almost be said that he had no manner at all, he took their presence and the performance of their duties so utterly for granted. Not one of them was ever made to feel, unpleasantly, the fact of his inferior position by reason of any look or word of the President. All were well assured that they could not get a word from him unless the business which brought them to his elbow justified them in coming. The number of times that Mrs. Lincoln herself entered his business-room at the White House could probably be counted on the fingers of one hand.

It is a misuse of words and a falsification of ideas to say or think that this absorption in duty and simplicity in manner implied or produced any real lack of dignity. True dignity of character can carry well what littleness breaks down under. The most superficial observer, looking in upon Lincoln and his Cabinet of uncommonly strong men, during an hour of trial and its counsels, could have had no difficulty in pointing out their unquestionable chief and leader.

Mr. Lincoln, in all his public career, invariably left his personal popularity to take care of itself. He never for one moment hesitated to do the most unpopular things that were required of him by the duties of the hour. In the long-run events were pretty sure to justify his judgment, even in cases where it had gone against that of other men or contrary to local public opinion.

Concerning a multitude of matters, including many of great importance, he was compelled to form his conclusions from such information as he was able to obtain from interested parties, making such allowances as he could for their prejudices. It was needful to trust largely to representations made by men whose social, political, or military position seemed to render them trustworthy and responsible witnesses. A notable instance of this occurred in the summer and fall of 1863. It had been difficult to steer a straight course among the jarring factions of Missouri and Kansas, especially because they all contained so many able and excellent men. Had each of the more prominent Union men of that section been in fact the being he was described by some equally active patriotic neighbor, Mr. Lincoln's task in the premises would have been comparatively easy. The foreign element in both States was large, and was mainly composed of German immigrants of the better classes. The New England settlers were numerous and were generally of the extreme anti-slavery type. The "old settler" element, on the other hand, was not at all anti-slavery, and a good deal of its "Union" feeling had been developed somewhat late in the day, but it was none the less important and entitled to thoughtful consideration. The "rebel sympathizers" were also numerous, and added to the difficulties of the situation the continual complications of their intrigues and conspiracies. It was simply impossible for any military commander, however competent as an "army man," to so carry himself in his management of affairs as not to get himself into trouble. Every man Mr. Lincoln sent there got in, if time were given

him. From the day of General Frémont's withdrawal, varieties of discontents had exhibited themselves in many annoying ways. There were not many "leading men," Senators, Congressmen, governors, generals, or editors, from the western bank of the Mississippi and beyond, who had not at one time or another obtained an interview with the President to explain to him the goodness and wisdom of their own faction and the un-mixed evil of every other.

Such was the case, in a measure, with several other States and localities; but nowhere else was the difficulty quite so ingrained and irremediable. Kansas and Missouri had been a sort of battle-ground, even before the war, and they had not yet entirely ceased to be so. The troubles in the Eastern States, in the Center, in the Northwest, were pretty well overcome by the effects of the great victories and of the Draft Riot in New York. Still, the political situation could not be considered at all clear so long as the disturbances in the far West were so great and were so directly attributed to the acts of "satraps" retained in power by the President's favoritism and incapacity.

The time drew near for the annual meeting, at Washington, of the Grand Council of the Union League, and the public generally was not at all aware of the fact. The disaffected politicians of Kansas and Missouri were, however, and they were all of them members of the League. The delegations from those States to the Grand Council were composed exclusively of the critics of the Administration. They included United States Senators, Representatives, and a Governor or so, and all the way across the country they addressed gatherings of people and rehearsed their story of the blunders and tyrannies of the Government. They reached the city of Washington in due time, and they attended the Grand Council.

This was an admirably selected representative body of men, fresh from the people. It was an independent Congress, an important part of whose membership was entitled to seats in

the other "Congress," provided for by the Constitution of the United States. The session was secret, of course, and there was no reason why men should not talk freely. Mr. Lincoln never knew—perhaps—how thoroughly his Western policy and much of his other policy was pulled in pieces in the course of that verbally stormy evening. His assailants had everything their own way at first. They labored with fiery energy. It was a desperate effort of the personal opposition in his own party to create a sentiment against him in timely preparation for the political canvass of 1864. The assault was well planned and was ably and even eloquently made, but it failed somewhat ignobly.

The Kansas military management had been selected as the very worst feature of all that part of the "dictatorship and tyrannical personal despotism," but no proper preparation had been made for the manner and matter of the reply. The Council seemed to be in almost entire sympathy with the oppressed and downtrodden complainants, and no single voice had been raised in defense of the Administration.

At last, however, one of the Grand Officers of the League took the stand. He simply offered evidence, written and oral, that the policy of Mr. Lincoln in Kansas, in whole and in part, had been at its outset advised and all but dictated by the very men who now assailed him for it. It was also shown that at no point from the beginning of the war had the President failed to consult with the Senators and members of Congress from both Kansas and Missouri.

There was very little of what is called eloquence in such a rejoinder; but no more speeches were made, for none were needed. The Council promptly and all but unanimously, omitting the malcontents from the count, adopted a resolution approving and sustaining the Administration.

It was a vote which meant a great deal at that peculiar juncture, and it was followed by yet another which was destined to produce important political fruit. This was the action of the



Grand Council providing that its next Annual Meeting should be held at the same time and in the same locality with the National Convention of the Republican party for the nomination of candidates for President and Vice-President. The Union League of America was fast becoming, to all present intents and purposes, the organized body of the Republican party and the Home Guard and rear-guard of the Union armies in the field.

The members of the Grand Council went home and reported what things they had heard and seen at Washington. Every man of them had heard and seen Abraham Lincoln, and, with a few exceptions, was proud of the fact and ready to sustain him in anything he might thenceforth see fit to do. It was simply impossible for any unprejudiced man or woman to look him in the face and take his kindly hand and then to not laugh at or be angry with the next lunatic who should speak of him as a "tyrant."

Even many who came to that gathering loaded with false ideas left their burdens on the steps of the White House when they came away from their interview. If it had been possible and if Mr. Lincoln could have met such a popular representation, newly selected every month in the year and man by man, there would have been small misunderstanding of him by the people. In one manner he was actually so doing, for men and women were continually coming to him with their sorrows and petitions. Now it was a mother asking for her sick or wounded son, that she might take him home with her and nurse him back to health. Then it was another mother, who had given four of her sons to her country and three had fallen in battle and but one was left, and she wanted him. Then it was a group of anxious men and women pleading for the forfeited life of some deserter, or for the establishment of a hospital, or for some other mitigation of the horrors of the war.

Not infrequently it was even an embassy from "the other side,"—some mother or wife pleading for a captive son or

husband. Mr. Noah Brooks, at that time a Washington correspondent for one of the New York papers, has given an instance of this latter kind which Mr. Lincoln himself, in one of his very few spare minutes, wrote out for Mr. Brooks to print as a newspaper paragraph. On the opposite page appears a fac-simile of the little scrap, entitled by Mr. Lincoln, "The President's Last, Shortest and Best Speech."

He listened to all, bore with all, sympathized with all; and he was glad indeed to be offered a fair excuse for extending mercy to an offender.

All the while, through the heavy shadows and through the brief gleams of broken sunshine, the hearts of the people became more and more knit to his, and there came to be less and less need of formal explanations between him and the patriotic masses.

By forcible draft as by voluntary enlistment, Mr. Lincoln was calling upon men to step forward and die for their country, and he well knew that his own name was among those "enrolled." He verily was dying by slow inches. It has been said, with some show of probability, that before he left Illinois he as well as others had a presentiment that he would fall by the hand of violence. There would be small cause for wonder if all that is related of this matter were minutely true. Still smaller occasion would there be to regard so very reasonable an impression as at all prophetic or supernatural.

The strong impression now spoken of was of another sort, and was equally reasonable. To one friend he said: "The springs of life are wearing away, and I shall not last." To another, in apology for telling a humorous story: "If it were not for this occasional vent, I should die." To another: "I feel a presentiment that I shall not outlast the Rebellion. When it is over, my work will be done." To another: "Whichever way it ends, I have the impression that I shall not last long after it is over." In 1864 Mrs. H. B. Stowe asked him "what policy he proposed to pursue after the war." With a mourn-

The President's last, shortest, and best  
speech.

On Thursday of last week two ladies from Tennessee came before the President asking the release of their husbands held as prisoners of war at Johnson's Island. They were put off till Friday, when they came again; and were again put off to Saturday. At each of the interviews one of the ladies urged that her husband was a religious man. On Saturday the President ordered the release of the prisoners, and then said to the lady "You say your husband is a religious man; tell him whether I meet him, that I say I am not some of a piece of religion, but that, in my opinion, the religion that sets men to rebel and fight against their government, because, as they think, that government does not sufficiently keep some men to eat their bread in the sweat of other man's face, is not the sort of religion upon which people can get to heaven!"

Abraham Lincoln.



ful sort of laugh, he replied : " After the war ? I shall not be troubled about that. The war is killing me."

Men looked into his face, day by day, and saw there something they could not understand. It gave them the idea of a man in suppressed pain, and they were apt to turn away with little inclination to find fault with him. Some weight should be given to all this, with reference to his " personal ambition" for a second term of office and his asserted desire to perpetuate his political power.

There was, as there always is and must be, a great deal of self-conceit and stupidity in the country in those days. There were men, in very considerable numbers, who had learned little or nothing in the terrible school of the war. Some of these, posing for the moment as " unconditional Union men," proposed and called an universal mass-meeting, to be held at Springfield, Illinois. That this was Mr. Lincoln's old home was an important part of the " stage effect " designed to be produced. As a part of the preparations for the announced discussion of the faults and follies of the Government, a written invitation to be present and hear himself discussed was sent to the President of the United States.

With this invitation, these Unconditional Union men forwarded a statement of some of the conditions upon which they were willing to *be* unconditional. They thus gave him an admirable opportunity for talking plainly to the elements, the whole country over, which they so well represented, and, at the same time, for setting them up for exhibition in a tolerably clear light before the world. His reply was dated August 23, 1863, at a time when he was making extensive preparations for employing colored men as soldiers. It is almost conversational in style and language, but was perfectly adapted to its purpose.

Among its other pointed, or stirring, or stinging sentences, are these :

" You say you will not fight to free negroes. Some of them seem willing to fight for you ; but no matter. Fight you, then,

exclusively to save the Union. I issued the Proclamation on purpose to aid you in saving the Union. . . . I thought that, in your struggle for the Union, to whatever extent the negroes should cease helping the enemy, to that extent it weakened the enemy in his resistance to you. But negroes, like other men, act upon motives. Why should they do anything for us if we will do nothing for them? If they stake their lives for us, they must be prompted by the strongest motive, even the promise of freedom. And the promise, being made, must be kept."

That was a clear enough setting forth of the mere worldly wisdom of his policy. It offered precisely the kind of self-preservation argument which such men might be supposed to be able to comprehend. He added, "The signs look better," and gave them a brief sketch of the advances already made toward the military end. He closed his reply with words which none who read them were likely to forget, and it mattered very little that some would not soon forgive.

"Peace does not appear so distant as it did. I hope it will come soon, and come to stay, and so come as to be worth the keeping in all future time. It will then have been proved that among freemen there can be no successful appeal from the ballot to the bullet, and that those who take such appeal are sure to lose their case and pay the cost. And there will be some black men who can remember that, with silent tongue, and clinched teeth, and well-poised bayonet, they have helped mankind on to this great consummation; while I fear there will be some white ones unable to forget that with malignant heart and deceitful speech they have striven to hinder it."

Never for one moment, from the beginning to the end, did Mr. Lincoln forget that the war for freedom and the Union was fought on behalf of the oppressed of all nations. There was no cause for wonder that the intelligent aristocracies and higher castes of Europe should desire the success of the Confederacy. The Rebels in a manner represented them and were curiously proud to say so. On the other hand, that multitudes



of the classes in other lands whose interests were at stake in the struggle—the ignorant, the poor, the toilers—should receive and hold and act upon a deep conviction of the truth of the matter, constitutes one of the most noteworthy features of the time. The cotton operatives of England suffered more than others from the effects of the war; but they were wiser than their rulers, and their hearts were with the North.

In 1863 they sent to the President a letter, from the workmen of Manchester in particular, but well understood to be the voice of a great multitude. They expressed their sympathy and good-will and hope, and he sent them a reply in which he said to them: “It has been often and studiously represented that the attempt to overthrow this government, which was built upon the foundation of human rights, and to substitute for it one which should rest exclusively upon the basis of human slavery, was likely to obtain the favor of Europe. Through the action of our disloyal fellow-citizens, the workmen of Europe have been subjected to severe trial, for the purpose of forcing their sanction to that attempt. Under these circumstances I cannot but regard your decisive utterances upon the question as an instance of sublime Christian heroism which has not been surpassed in any age or in any country.”

More and more clear, as time went on, became Mr. Lincoln’s perception of the Source of all true heroism. More continuously and thoughtfully outspoken became his public acknowledgments and declarations of his perceptions. In his public dispatch announcing to the nation an assured victory at Gettysburg, he expressed his desire that, in the customary celebration of “The Fourth of July,” the anniversary of national independence, “He whose will, not ours, should everywhere be done, be everywhere revered with profoundest gratitude.”

The country never before had such a keeping of the Fourth; but it is worth while to note how sudden was the change from utter depression to a capacity for “celebration.” In the city of Washington itself the usual preparations had been under

way for some time and on a somewhat larger scale than usual. Such was the gloomy state of the public mind, however, that several of the most patriotic citizens and even well-known statesmen openly declared their refusal to join in the exercises of the day. The feeling grew to such a strength that a meeting of "loyal citizens" was held, and a committee appointed to call upon the Chairman of the Celebration Committee having the matter in charge and urge an abandonment of the whole affair, as inappropriate under the truly awful circumstances. The appointed committee called upon the chairman and stated their errand, receiving for reply :

"Gentlemen, there will be a celebration of the Fourth of July in Washington this year, and there will be a big one too, if we can hear Lee's cannon all the time, and if we adjourn from the speaker's stand to the trenches."

It was made a great day, there and everywhere, in the abiding assurance from Mr. Lincoln that the sound of General Lee's cannon was forever receding. Everywhere was read, as a part of the regular proceedings, the dispatch of the President declaring his belief in the God who had given to the nation the fruits of that great battle and of the parallel victories in the West.

He had not, however, completed the great lessons he was to teach from the tremendous text of the Gettysburg fight. The State of Pennsylvania bought a piece of land on the battle-field and gave it to the Government of the United States as a cemetery wherein to bury the bodies of the slain heroes. It was land on which many of them had actually fallen, and some were already buried there. On the 19th of November the battle cemetery was dedicated with solemn ceremonies. The Hon. Edward Everett, of Massachusetts, delivered an oration worthy of his high oratorical fame. Mr. Lincoln had been invited to be present, but the stern pressure of his duties prevented elaborate preparation. After leaving Washington, while on the way, he wrote a few sentences which have found a lasting place in the hearts and memories of men.

“Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth upon this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met upon a great battle-field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting-place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. But in a larger sense we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it far above our power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember, what we say here; but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us, the living, rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining for us, that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to the cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion; that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that the government of the people, by the people, and for the people shall not perish from the earth.”

Among the vast throng listening there were those who had expected a long speech, full of they knew not what, and so were disappointed, and freely declared as much; but Mr. Lincoln had said enough, and all the loyal land responded with a deep-voiced and reverent “Amen!”

FAC-SIMILE  
OF THE  
GETTYSBURG CEMETERY SPEECH,  
AS COPIED OUT FOR ENGRAVING,  
BY THE  
PRESIDENT, AFTER ITS DELIVERY.

*Address delivered at the dedication of the  
Cemetery at Gettysburg.*

*Four score and seven years ago our fathers  
brought forth on this continent, a new na-  
tion, conceived in liberty, and dedicated  
to the proposition that all men are cre-  
ated equal.*

*Now we are engaged in a great civil war;  
testing whether that nation, or any nation  
so conceived and so dedicated, can long  
endure. We are met on a great battle-field  
of that war. We have come to dedicate a  
portion of that field, as a final resting  
place for those who here gave their lives  
that that nation might live. It is alto-  
gether fitting and proper that we should  
do this.*

*But, in a larger sense, we can not dedi-*

cots — we can not consecrate — we can not  
 hallow this ground. The brave men, living  
 and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated  
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 the last full measure of devotion — that  
 we here highly resolve that these dead shall  
 not have died in vain — that this nation,  
 under God, shall have a new birth of free-  
 dom — and that government of the people,  
 by the people, for the people, shall not per-  
 ish from the earth.

Abraham Lincoln.

November 19, 1863.

## CHAPTER L.

## THE BEGINNING OF THE END.

Keeping Good Workmen—Absence of Favoritism—A Political Revolution  
—A National Prayer-Meeting—The Coming General—Helpless intrigues.

It would be fair to describe Mr. Lincoln's management of the long list of military commanders under his direction as a persistent effort by him to put each man, as nearly as might be, in the place for which he was best fitted and wherein he could perform the most effective service.

If, having appointed any man to an especial duty, he found him insufficient for it, he was quite willing to transfer him to another. If a strong man's usefulness were impaired or destroyed by local or transitory causes, no undue or continuing weight was ever assigned to these.

Fine illustrations of this rare element in the President's capacity as a ruler are furnished by the records of Generals Burnside and Hooker, after each in turn had ceased to command the Army of the Potomac. Neither Fredericksburg nor Chancellorsville was permitted to deprive the country of valuable services. There was no sort of quarrel between either of them and the Commander-in-Chief, and they went on, in new fields and with other armies, to prove the soundness of his judgment concerning them.

The watchfulness required for the exercise of such a judgment was all but sleepless, and called for the constant study of circumstances as well as of men and of apparent results. Mr. Lincoln's hours of hard-won solitude were a perpetual "court of inquiry." He followed every movement of every army



with the map before him, yet never permitted himself to make the error of meddling with the decision of a competent general in the field. He himself, unintentionally but accurately, sets forth his methods of study and control, in his letter of congratulation to General Grant after the Vicksburg triumph. It is dated July 13, 1863.

“MY DEAR GENERAL: I do not remember that you and I have ever met personally. I write this now as a grateful acknowledgment for the almost inestimable service you have done the country. I write to say a word further. When you first reached the vicinity of Vicksburg, I thought you should do what you finally did,—march the troops across the neck, run the batteries with the transports, and then go below; and I never had any faith, except a general hope, that you knew better than I that the Yazoo Pass expedition and the like could succeed. When you got below and took Port Gibson, Grand Gulf, and vicinity, I thought you should go down the river and join General Banks, and when you turned northward, east of the Big Black, I feared it was a mistake. I wish, now, to make the personal acknowledgment that you were right and I was wrong.”

Every man who did his duty was sure of precisely such thoughtful and unselfish appreciation, if by any means the facts in the case could be brought to the knowledge of the President. Sometimes, beyond question, the facts were not so brought to his knowledge, and injustice followed; but it was never by any neglect upon the part of Mr. Lincoln. Even injured men came to so understand the matter at last, and few were so unreasonable as to demand from him omniscience as well as justice. As a whole, the record of his assignments to duty will bear a remarkably close scrutiny, and his continual discoveries of the men he was looking for were notably justified by their subsequent careers and achievements. His personal attachments, strong as they admittedly were, never were permitted to come between him and his perception of the re-

quirements of the public service. His oldest son, Robert Todd Lincoln, was a student at college when the war broke out. His father did but restrain the young man's enthusiastic impulse to join the army and kept him at his books until his course of study was completed. A subordinate staff appointment was then given him, just as such appointments were given to hundreds of other bright young men, and there all parental "favoritism" terminated. The President's son served to the end of the war and left the army as a simple captain. It is more than probable that his abilities would have given him a higher grade but that his very birthright was in his way. The record conveys its lesson forcibly.

The remainder of the summer and autumn of the year 1863 was well marked by military activities and successes, and only here and there by any considerable check to the national arms, both in the East and West. Very much the most important work accomplished, however, was largely in the nature of a clearing up and securing title to the ground already won, and preparing for the final struggle.

The results of the fall elections were such as might have been expected. The reaction of popular feeling from deep depression to buoyant hope was sufficient to carry every State but one, New Jersey, for the Administration. Even there the combined opposition assumed an attitude of earnest Unionism. A Congress was secured which could be depended on for voting the last man and the last dollar for war purposes. It nevertheless contained a number of active and able men who were anything but well pleased with Mr. Lincoln's personal control of the affairs in his hands. There was little to be wondered at in this. He was no tyrant, indeed, and he was thoughtfully cautious in his respect for all the prerogatives of the legislative branch of the government; but the fact of his autocracy within his own sphere was often painfully manifest. The United States contained but one President, and he was necessarily dictatorial in war times: and his name was Abraham

Lincoln. It was not always pleasant for some other man, strong of will and conscious of capacity and of good purposes towards himself and his country, when brought into sudden contact or collision with an unyielding power he had never felt before.

Very little public grumbling was done, however, before Congress assembled at Washington, for the people were hardly in a state of mind to listen to it kindly, except from mouth-pieces of the beaten "opposition." The President, without especially laboring for it, was fast rallying to his personal support the great religious element which, in all its diversified forms of doctrinal belief and of semi-repudiation of doctrinal belief, is the positive body and soul of the American people. He was uniting, as one man, the multitude of earnest hearts that believed, absolutely, that the cause of the Union was the cause of the God Almighty.

On the 15th of July, 1863, he issued a proclamation, immediately following up his previous utterances of a similar nature, in which he named the 6th of August as a day of public thanksgiving and prayer. He asked all men and women to "render the homage due to the Divine Majesty for the wonderful things He has done in the nation's behalf; and invoke the influences of his Holy Spirit to subdue the anger which has produced and so long sustained a needless and cruel rebellion; to change the hearts of the insurgents; to guide the counsels of the government with wisdom adequate to so great a national emergency; and to visit with tender care and consolation, throughout the length and breadth of our land, all those who, through the vicissitudes of marches, voyages, battles, and sieges, have been brought to suffer in mind, body, or estate; and finally, to lead the whole nation through paths of repentance and submission to the Divine Will, back to the perfect enjoyment of union and fraternal peace."

That was a grand prayer-meeting; and it was led by the President in person. He made the customary "Thanksgiving

Day" in November the occasion of a similar proclamation ; and it is through him, in a very great measure, that that day has ceased to be local and has become general and national in its annual observance. He again summoned the people to prayer and thanksgiving on the 7th of December, after the Union successes in East Tennessee. The conviction grew in the minds of all that the President was fighting this fight out in the name of God and believed that God was helping him. It was easier for the masses to strengthen their own faith after that idea took permanent root. The very few who sneered at the whole thing as an hypocritical formality were not numbered among those whose hearts were aching over losses or who were meditating further sacrifices for the cause. Men who suffer have a keen instinct which informs them of the suffering of another man, and it was of little use, in those days, to accuse Abraham Lincoln of playing a part. He was well hated, but even his worst enemies were forced to believe in him.

One of the steps towards the proposed reorganization of the Army was the appointment of General Grant to the command of the Military Department of the Mississippi ; but it was only one of several steps which the President had in view. The rest of them depended very much upon the course and outcome of the winter campaigns.

It was by no means plain that General Meade was the right man, above all others, to lead the Army of the Potomac ; much less to handle the tremendous forces preparing for the last struggle with the Rebellion. It was sure that the Confederacy would die hard, striking terrible blows to its last breath. The situation demanded something more than an accomplished soldier ; something more, even, than a good general. It was time for the war to be closed, and only a hand of iron could be entrusted with the relentless and machine-like processes of its closing. The eyes of the nation as well as of the President were turning with more and more of definite hope and purpose towards *the* man for the hour which was coming.

The Message to Congress contained, of necessity, an historical review of the events of the year and a setting forth of their justification of the leading features of the policy of the Administration. Emancipation, employment of colored soldiers, reconstruction, foreign relations, the national finances, a number of minor topics, were presented in proper form, but it was mainly a "report of progress" and an expression of confident hope. The territory already rescued from the grasp of the Richmond government was to be restored to relations with the Constitution and the laws as rapidly as possible. No doubt remained that its present reoccupation implied permanent possession. No power existed in the now shattered and weakened Confederacy to break the national mastery of the regions so to be reconstructed, and the beginning of the end had come.

A conviction of this fact settled firmly in the minds of all the politicians north of the Rebel army-lines, and it produced some curious results. Close upon the announcement by Mr. Lincoln that he regarded his administration as a success and not a failure came the accusation that he was ambitious of a reelection to the Presidency. The suggestion that he was already intriguing for such a result followed as a matter of course, and it came from the lips of the busy men who were already intriguing to prevent his success. The twin accusations, as such, died a very early and perfectly natural death. The sound-minded people, the country over, took it for granted that Mr. Lincoln desired a second term and thought no whit the worse of him. No man with unclouded brain could have understood or approved a willingness, on the part of the President, to lay down such a work before it was completed. Not many would have held him morally excusable for such a sin against the nation. He would need another term to reap and gather in the great harvest now ripening, and there was no other reaper to whom the task was at all likely to be given unless the "opposition" themselves should succeed in electing their man. As for "intrigue," it was only too obvious that no other form

of it was called for than might be included in a vigorous and successful prosecution of the war. Everybody saw the point clearly, and not a few were intelligent enough to perceive and say that the politicians had a great deal more time on their hands for that kind of political work than had the over-wearied toiler in the map-strewn room in the White House. They had all the time, indeed, that was used in the premises. Mr. Lincoln gave the matter no attention whatever, except when somebody forced it upon him. The real intriguers talked much and worked hard and failed for a long time to discover what a mere skeleton of a faction they really were. It consisted almost altogether of "leading men," and the further they went the greater became the gap between them and the vote-casting masses of the Union.



## CHAPTER LI.

## THE SECOND NOMINATION.

Lieutenant-General Grant—The First Great Relief—Dealing with Guerillas  
—Condensation of the Confederacy—The Double National Convention  
—The Administration Formally Approved.

THE military events of the winter of 1863-4, intensely interesting as they were, belong exclusively to the history of the war. They were such as enabled Mr. Lincoln to move steadily forward along the line he had so distinctly marked out.

The grade of Lieutenant-General, previously created solely for the purpose of conferring an honor upon General Scott, was revived by Act of Congress, February 29, 1864, and the President fulfilled his own previous purpose concerning it when he complied with the popular acclamation which named Ulysses S. Grant as the man for the place. It was equally a matter of course that the President and the Lieutenant-General should instantly agree upon General W. T. Sherman as Grant's successor in the West.

General Grant received his new commission on the 9th of March, 1864, at the hands of the President in person, at the Executive Mansion, in the presence of the Cabinet and General Halleck. The occasion was made somewhat ceremonial, but the words spoken on either side were few and very much to the point. The appointment of an officer outranking all others was an affair of momentous importance. So far as the Army was concerned, only the President and, through him, the Secretary of War held higher commissions. Still it should be borne in mind that the new rank of General Grant did not necessarily affect

or change or reduce the rank of any other officer in any of the armies. General Meade remained as before, for instance, in direct command of the Army of the Potomac, which afterwards received Grant's orders through Meade. General Halleck did not cease to be the President's military counselor because Mr. Lincoln had at last obtained an arm of iron wherewith to deal the blows he had so longed to deal, but in vain.

General Grant at once entered upon the discharge of his duties, taking up his headquarters with the Army of the Potomac, on the 10th of March; and it was not long before the President began to experience an unwonted feeling of relief. The tremendous burden which he had borne so long and so patiently began to slip away a little. He could with difficulty realize it at first, the situation was so new and so agreeable. A few weeks later, in April, a personal friend came into his office on Sunday forenoon. The President lay upon the sofa, seeming more than usually fatigued but cheerful. He did not rise at first, but chatted freely upon several topics. At last his visitor remarked :

"Now, Mr. Lincoln, what sort of a man is Grant? I've never even seen him. He has taken hold here while I have been laid up. What do you think of him?"

The President half arose, and laughed silently, as he replied :

"Well, — , I hardly know what to think of him, altogether. He's the quietest little fellow you ever saw."

"How is that?"

"Why, he makes the least fuss of any man you ever knew. I believe two or three times he has been in this room a minute or so before I knew he was here. It's about so all around. The only evidence you have that he's in any place is that he makes things *git* ! Wherever he is, things move !"

He grew energetic as he talked, and there was almost a glow upon his face. He was describing the man he had been longing for. Other questions and answers followed, until the visitor inquired :

"But how about Grant's generalship? Is he going to be *the* man?"

Mr. Lincoln again half arose, and emphasized his reply with his long forefinger:

"——, Grant is the first general I've had! He's a general!"

"How do you mean, Mr. Lincoln?"

"Well, I'll tell you what I mean. You know how it's been with all the rest. As soon as I put a man in command of the army, he'd come to me with a plan of a campaign and about as much as say, 'Now, I don't believe I can do it, but if you say so I'll try it on,' and so put the responsibility of success or failure on me. They all wanted me to be the general. Now it isn't so with Grant. He hasn't told me what his plans are. I don't know, and I don't want to know. I'm glad to find a man that can go ahead without me."

A slightly critical reply brought the President bolt upright.

"You see, ——, when any of the rest set out on a campaign, they'd look over matters and pick out some one thing they were short of and they knew I couldn't give 'em, and tell me they couldn't hope to win unless they had it,—and it was most generally cavalry." He paused for one of his quiet, long, peculiar laughs and went on. "Now, when Grant took hold, I was waiting to see what his pet impossibility would be, and I reckoned it would be cavalry, as a matter of course, for we hadn't horses enough to mount even what men we had. There were fifteen thousand, or thereabouts, up near Harper's Ferry, and no horses to put them on. Well, the other day Grant sends to me about those very men, just as I expected; but what he wanted to know was whether he should make infantry of 'em or disband 'em. He doesn't ask impossibilities of me, and he's the first general I've had that didn't."

Somewhat carelessly and half grotesquely he had sketched some of his most trying responsibilities, such as had pressed upon him from before the firing of the Sumter gun. Men of all other sorts, as well as generals in command of armies, had demanded

impossibilities of him, and some had hated and denounced him because he performed no miracle. He might well rejoice also, as he did, in the arrival of a man who would require no urging, but who would be sure to strike again, after every battle, with supreme indifference to the semblance which that battle might bear to either victory or defeat. That part of the load could be confidently laid aside: but what remained was still over-heavy for mortal shoulders.

The work of restoring order in the reoccupied States was going bravely forward, and the severest measures for the suppression of guerilla warfare and neighborhood revenges were enforced with the President's full approval. That is to say, with his full approval of as much as he knew of the precise manner of the enforcement, for a good deal of bloody work was done whereof no report went up. The merciful side of his nature inclined him, in this important matter, to extend all possible protection to undefended homes and women and children. The continuous record of atrocities committed was an all-sufficient justification. He took all reasonable means, at the same time, for maintaining and defending the rights of colored soldiers in the ranks of Union armies, East and West.

Not taking into specific consideration operations on the sea, nor sea-coast defenses, nor detached commands, the military situation in the spring of the year 1864 may be summed up in outline as follows:

The dimensions and the strength of the Confederacy had been materially reduced, but the latter had been in a manner concentrated for its last despairing struggle. Its armies were composed largely of veterans, and were led by generals of unquestionable capacity. It had massed the greater part of these in two main bodies with their branches. One, under Lee, defended its old ground in Virginia. The other, under Johnston, held northwestern Georgia, and with it the railway connections and topographical advantages which made that position the key to all that remained to the Rebellion of the cotton-growing

States. Much remained to be done in Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas, and elsewhere, but these two armies contained about all that was really left to carry on the war for slavery. Against these, therefore, all the hard fighting of the year 1864 was planned and directed, and all other operations were of minor importance.

Every now and then half-muffled voices came up from beyond the Rebel army-lines, telling of the weariness of their long-suffering which the masses of the Southern people were not permitted openly to express. They had done all that it was possible for human beings to do, and were beginning to perceive that all subsequent battles were to be in the nature of useless bloodshed, bordering horribly close upon the crime of wholesale murder. No voice whatever, nor any small murmur of one, came from the merciless despotism at Richmond or from the men who controlled its armies in the field. They were manifestly determined to continue the strife to the bitter end.

The machinery of the Federal government was now in almost perfect working order, but its very bulk and its remorseless efficiency made it an incubus. The people were fast wearying of incessant exactions, in spite of the general appearance of prosperity. The President was straining every power given him to maintain the Army and Navy at their utmost activity, and the Opposition was almost hourly supplied with texts, great or small, upon which to preach its crusade against his administration.

Extravagance, wastefulness, corruption, favoritism, heartless throwing away of human life,—a thousand separate accusations swelled steadily into a chorus which was by many men believed to arise from the tax-paying and war-sustaining masses. This idea was altogether a mistake; but sundry curious political experiments were tried before the truth of the matter could be demonstrated. At this day there would be small profit in relating the dull details of the several experiments. One of

them included an independent and very irregular "Republican Convention" at Cleveland, Ohio, on the 31st of May, for the purpose of declaring that the national liberties were in danger, and that Mr. Lincoln should be set aside in accordance with "the one-term principle," which had never been heard of before to any noteworthy extent.

What threatened at first to be a more dangerous, because altogether regular, undertaking was made in another way, and produced beneficial results.

The National Convention of the Republican party was to be held at Baltimore, Maryland, on the 8th of June, 1864, and the National Grand Council of the Union League of America was summoned to meet in the same city on the 7th. Something like two thirds of the delegates to the latter, roughly estimated, were also delegates to the former, and the controlling spirits of both were largely the same men. The malcontent elements of the party secured full and satisfactory representation in the Grand Council, and there were those among them who confidently expected to there exert a power which would render the renomination of Abraham Lincoln impossible. Some of his best friends were not without anxiety as to the results obtainable in such a body meeting in secret session.

The day came, and the city of Baltimore was packed to overflowing. The session of the Grand Council was to be held in the evening, and it was not easy for the outside world to guess what might be done by men whose lips were closed as to their instructions and their purposes. They came together in perfect order and decorum, but of course without any audience to hear or cheer or interfere. Hardly had the preliminary work of the evening been completed before the prepared assault upon the Administration in general and Mr. Lincoln in particular was vigorously begun and prosecuted. There was a superabundance of seemingly good material for such an assault, and it



seemed before long as if the Council were about to be swept away by a rising tide. This, however, was mainly because the Kansas and Missouri orators and a few others had been quietly permitted to have their own way unanswered. Besides, almost every man in the whole body of delegates was compelled to admit to himself that mistakes had been committed, by somebody; by a great many persons in authority; perhaps by Mr. Lincoln; perhaps even by Congress; perhaps by the Nation as a whole; and perhaps by the human race itself. The very bitterness and eloquence of the successive attacks answered an admirable purpose. They cleared away the mental fogs in the minds of all who heard, and at last all of these that remained required only the strong breeze of one decisive argument. It was given by Senator "Jim" Lane of Kansas, himself formerly for a season anything but a friend of Mr. Lincoln. He defended the Administration. His speech was not long, but it was masterly, for it enabled each of his hearers to ask himself and answer the simple question:

"Will not the country be safer with Abraham Lincoln as President than with any other man I can name?"

There was little further debate after Senator Lane's speech. Some voting was done. The difficulty was all over when it was discovered that only a couple of dozens of even the delegates to the Grand Council were willing to run the risk of venturing before the people with any other nominee than Lincoln. The anticipated storm had come and gone, and the National Convention the next day formally ratified the decision of the Union League without any disturbance whatever. The twenty-two votes of Missouri were cast for General Grant at first, but were then changed to Lincoln, and the nomination was declared to be unanimous.

The platform of principles adopted left very little to be asked for as an expression of the will and faith and hope of the loyal people of the United States. The very act of dropping the

name of Hannibal Hamlin, of Maine as a candidate for the Vice-Presidency, and the substitution of that of Andrew Johnson of Tennessee, was a strong recognition and approval of the policy of reconstruction. This action is said to have been urged by Mr. Lincoln's personal friends at his own private request.

According to custom, the Convention appointed its chairman, Governor Dennison, of Ohio, with a committee, to wait upon the President at Washington with a formal announcement of the action thus taken. He received them, listened to their address, and responded as follows:

"Having served four years in the depths of a great and yet unended national peril, I can view this call to a second term in nowise more flattering to myself than as an expression of the public judgment that I may better finish a difficult work in which I have labored from the first than could any one less severely schooled to the task. In this view, and with assured reliance on the Almighty Ruler who has graciously sustained us thus far, and with increased gratitude to the generous people for their continued confidence, I accept the renewed trust with its yet onerous and perplexing duties and responsibilities."

He was waited upon the same day by a similar committee from the Union League, but no report was made to him by them of the exact nature of the highly interesting session of that body.

In due time he received the written notification of the action of the Republican Convention, with a copy of the platform, and to this he replied, on the 27th of June:

"GENTLEMEN: Your letter of the 14th inst., formally notifying me that I have been nominated by the Convention you represent for the Presidency of the United States for four years from the fourth of March next, has been received. The

nomination is gratefully accepted, as the resolutions of the Convention called the platform are heartily approved. While the resolution in regard to the supplanting of republican governments on the Western Continent is fully concurred in, there might be misunderstanding were I not to say that the position of the government in relation to the action of France in Mexico, as assumed, through the State Department, and endorsed by the Convention among the measures and acts of the Executive, will be faithfully maintained so long as the state of facts shall leave that position pertinent and applicable. I am especially gratified that the soldier and seaman were not forgotten by the Convention, as they forever must and will be remembered by the grateful country for whose salvation they devoted their lives.

“Thanking you for the kind and complimentary terms in which you have communicated the nomination and other proceedings of the Convention, I subscribe myself

“Your obedient servant,

“ABRAHAM LINCOLN.”

The platform and the entire action of the Convention, with the terms of their formal acceptance, combined to express one fact and idea; and this was, that the Republican party had determined to go before the people upon the record made by Mr. Lincoln as President, and to stand or fall with him. The Opposition, calling itself the Democratic party, took up the challenge so offered. It should not be necessary to remark in this connection, but it may be well to do so for the benefit of careless readers, that the parties of that day are not the parties of this, whatever may be some of the incidental inheritances of our existing political organisms. It is unavoidable to employ here the party names then in use; but it should be with the understanding that they do not necessarily describe or define anything now in existence.

Mr. Lincoln himself had long since ceased to be a partisan in any sense of that word. He was the representative and director of the great forces, moral, intellectual, and physical, devoted to the work of developing, shaping, defending, and perpetuating the new Nation, thenceforth to be known as the United States of America. As he himself expressed it in his Gettysburg speech, he had "highly resolved that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom ;" and that which is born again is no more the same, forever and ever.

## CHAPTER LII.

## ON TRIAL.

The Campaign of Calumny—The Reconstruction Proclamation—Traps which Captured Nothing—Skirmishing Diplomacy—The Blunders of the Opposition—A Union General in Bad Company.

THE National Convention of the Democratic party had been called to meet at Chicago on the 27th of August. There remained, therefore, after Mr. Lincoln's second nomination, more than two full months during which his enemies might plot and plan and search for the weak spots in his armor and devise weapons wherewith to stab him. They had in this a great apparent advantage, with the concurrent privilege of misrepresenting whatever he or his might do, or fail to do, in the mean time. Their party press could describe every battle as more or less of a defeat and keep its columns open to the virulent expression of every possible form of criticism, discontent, or personal enmity. The Administration was on trial before the country as a tyranny and a failure, and all the witnesses against it were to be called, mostly swearing if not sworn, and they and their able advocates were to have a free, full, unhindered hearing. That which could pass unharmed through such an ordeal must have in it a great preponderance of such pure gold as need not to fear the fire.

The Opposition was not left altogether to the blundering devices of the second-rate demagogues and new ambitions which nominally controlled its present operations. The brains of the old pro-slavery Democracy had ever been supplied by the South, for the greater part, and the best inspiration and help of its campaign of 1864 came still from Richmond.

The very directness and simplicity with which the great political question of the day was propounded had in it something appalling to many men. All idea of change for the sake of change, so attractive to the restless and the weary, was shut out. The result was to be something as yet unknown, or else four years more of Abraham Lincoln. No man was greatly in doubt as to what the latter alternative included. He had made his purposes clearly understood, and his first public act after his nomination was taken unselfishly, without the slightest reference to its effect upon his personal popularity. Congress passed, in July and just before its adjournment, an Act embodying an elaborate plan of reconstruction for the seceded States, recovered and to be recovered. It provided a system of bonds and fetters for the Executive as well as for the regained areas, and the President refused his approval. It was necessary for him to explain his position to the country, and he did so, on the 8th of July, in a proclamation. In this he embodied the Act, as one of several admissible plans of reconstruction, but refused to commit himself, in advance, to that or any other specific mode of procedure, or to set aside the State governments already organized in Arkansas and Louisiana. His action called forth very bitter assaults from men who had been the active promoters of the Act, in the Senate and House of Representatives; but the acquiescence of the general public in the views of Mr. Lincoln was so plainly manifested that no great harm was done. The unkindly personal nature of some criticisms made by former friends galled him a little, but he was absorbed in watching movements of his political enemies which were of a much more perilous and threatening character.

It was manifest to the Richmond managers of the Democratic party that there was little hope of successfully opposing a renewal of power to the Lincoln Administration otherwise than by creating a division among its adherents. For this purpose, therefore, they plotted well and wisely. The trap they



laid was one into which an unwary man might easily have stumbled. That the Northern people were weary of the war was very obvious. That they would hail with delight any prospect of peace was a matter of course. If, therefore, Mr. Lincoln could be forced or beguiled into presenting an appearance of standing in the way of a restoration of peace, the Democratic Convention at Chicago would be provided with a war-cry and the Opposition could go before the country with new hope of winning the fall elections.

The country did not contain a purer patriot, with wider influence, nor the Republican party an abler advocate than Horace Greeley, editor of the *New York Tribune*. He was therefore selected as the gateway through which the insidious attack could best be made. On the 5th of July a letter was sent to Mr. Greeley from a wandering diplomatist named Jewett, at Niagara Falls, setting forth that two commissioners of the Confederate Government were in Canada, with full powers to negotiate a peace. He asked a conference with Mr. Greeley or a safe-conduct for the Richmond men to come to New York. Very properly, Mr. Greeley sent the letter to the President, with a statement of his own views of the matter and of the perils threatening the party and the Administration. He said, among other things: "A widespread conviction that the government and its supporters are not anxious for peace, and do not improve proffered opportunities to achieve it, is doing great harm now, and is morally certain, unless removed, to do far greater in the approaching election."

He thus described, with a fair degree of accuracy, the sort of mine which the Democratic managers were digging. Mr. Lincoln replied, on the 9th of July:

"If you can find any person, anywhere, professing to have any proposition of Jefferson Davis, *in writing*, embracing the restoration of the Union and abandonment of slavery, whatever else it embraces, say to him that he may come to me with you."

Mr. Greeley was again induced to write, on the 13th, that

two persons, duly commissioned and empowered to negotiate for peace, were waiting near Niagara Falls for a conference with the President or his proper representative; or they and another would come to Washington for such a conference if a safe-conduct were afforded. Their names were given, and were such as to make the affair assume a semblance of plausibility.

Other correspondence followed; a safe-conduct was freely offered to any "commissioners" duly empowered as stated in the President's first reply; Major John Hay, one of the President's private secretaries, was sent to New York and to Niagara Falls with full power in the premises; but the "commissioners" were compelled to acknowledge that they were not accredited by the Confederate Government. They were a very attractive political trap and they were not anything more. A very precise statement of the President's position was carried to Niagara Falls by Major Hay and was afterwards printed and read by the nation. It was addressed to many millions of people, when it was written, quite as much as to any pair or trio of rebel negotiators for party capital. It read:

"EXECUTIVE MANSION,  
"WASHINGTON, July 18, 1864.

*"To whom it may concern:*

"Any proposition which embraces the restoration of peace, the integrity of the whole Union, and the abandonment of slavery, and which comes by and with an authority that can control the armies now at war against the United States, will be received and considered by the Executive Government of the United States, and will be met on liberal terms on substantial and collateral points; and the bearer or bearers thereof shall have safe-conduct both ways."

The commissioners were of course indignant, and said so; and a slight misunderstanding arose between the President and Mr. Greeley as to the details of the correspondence and its

management. Nevertheless the worst of the intended mischief was prevented, the subtle plot was made a failure, and all that could be said and done, before or after election-day, could not convince any large number of sound-minded voters that the beginning of an offer of actual peace had been made or intended. That is, of peace on any such terms as those set forth by Mr. Lincoln. The country, as a whole, had finally decided, in its heart of hearts, that it was not willing to have any other kind of peace, live or die.

The Opposition made only fairly good profit by its two months of preparation, and learned no wisdom at all. When its National Convention came together at Chicago, it made Governor Seymour, of New York, its presiding officer, and Vallandigham, of Ohio, the chairman of its committee on resolutions. The latter crept back from his grotesque banishment in the Confederate lines just about in time to frame the platform of grievances upon which Mr. Lincoln was to be assailed.

The platform recited duly all known complaints against the Administration, and demanded a cessation of hostilities. It was a foregone necessity that even such an absurd agglomeration of discontent should appeal in some way to loyal sentiment, and some loyalty was therefore put in. A further attempt was made in the nomination of General McClellan as the Democratic candidate for President. George H. Pendleton, of Ohio, was named for Vice-President. It is only bare justice to General McClellan to record that it soon appeared that he felt very strangely about that platform and about his remarkable associates and indorsers. He had had his difficulties with Mr. Lincoln, indeed, and he had views of his own as to the management of the war, but he had never done anything to entitle or condemn him to rank with the kind of men who had been foremost in giving him that nomination. The speedy reports of his personal and honorable discontent sent quite a large number of sensible voters over to Mr. Lincoln's support.

The Democratic Convention closed its session with a covert

threat which had a half-way revolutionary sound and scared men away from them. It did not dissolve, as is customary with such bodies, but adjourned, "subject to be called at any time and place that the National Executive Committee may designate."

Important Union successes in the field aided materially in solidifying the good effect produced by the action of the Democratic Convention. Telegraphic reports of victories were unpleasant commentaries upon editorial or other assertions that "the conduct of the war by the Lincoln despotism has been and is a disgraceful failure."

It could but be manifest to all that the President had at his disposal the enormous and ubiquitous machinery of the government. The Opposition determined to prop their failing fortunes with the assertion that he was using his power as the national Executive to secure his own re-election.

In a reply to a delegation of loyal Marylanders, early in October, he said :

"I therefore say that, if I live, I shall remain President until the fourth of March, and that whoever shall be constitutionally elected in November shall be duly installed as President on the fourth of March ; and, in the interval, I shall do my utmost that whoever is to hold the helm for the next voyage shall start with the best chance of saving the ship."

Now at such a time there might possibly be raised a question as to who, after the votes were counted, was "constitutionally elected." Even in advance it might be effectively charged that Mr. Lincoln was already using his power to prevent a constitutional election. An excellent opportunity for getting a little mischief ready beforehand was afforded by the course of events in Tennessee. Andrew Johnson, the Republican candidate for Vice-President, was military governor of that State, in process of reconstruction. The convention called to reorganize the State had been composed of unconditional Union men, and had provided an oath to be taken by all voters at

the elections, which it also provided for. This was an oath of loyalty which could have been truthfully taken by only a small minority of the delegates to the Chicago Convention, although it contained no word which could have troubled the conscience of any loyal citizen of the United States. The cry was loudly raised that this was a trick of the Administration to prevent "the McClellan men" of Tennessee from voting. To strengthen the cry, a committee of such men was chosen to bear a written protest to the President, at Washington. They came and he received them, but for once his overtaken patience gave way. The committee afterwards reported that he received them "roughly." That he even said to their chairman :

"I expect to let the friends of George B. McClellan manage their side of this contest in their own way, and I will manage my side of it in my way." In reply to their demand for an answer in writing, as they reported, he said :

"Not now. Lay those papers down here. I may or may not write something about this hereafter. I know you intend to make a point of this. But go ahead. You have my answer."

If the report be correct, and it may be, Mr. Lincoln betrayed irritation. A pitfall was opened before him and he was asked to tumble into it, and there was a lack of courtesy in the manner of his immediate refusal. Critical people declared that he should have rejected the mud-hole with grace and dignity. He rejected it, at all events, and with force, in a written communication, dated the 22d of October, which left the Opposition no profit whatever from that speculation. The McClellan ticket was ostentatiously withdrawn from Tennessee, on the alleged ground that its supporters there could not take the oath.

## CHAPTER LIII.

## THE NATION'S VERDICT.

The Rebellion Bleeding to Death—A Half a Million More—The Results of the Election—Sherman's March to the Sea—The Last Great Battle in the West—Changes in the Cabinet—Grant on "Executive Interference."

THE course of the civil war during the summer and early autumn of the year 1864, studded thickly as it was with bloody battles, may be described with fair exactness as a process of attrition. Both in the East and West, the opposing armies were grinding in almost continuous struggle.

The military results, viewed strictly as such, were in favor of the Union armies, and, all the while, the conquered districts put behind these in their advances were becoming more and more hopelessly lost forever to the Confederacy. One obvious fact needed no presentation in any army bulletin. The area from which the Rebel forces could draw recruits and supplies was steadily narrowing. Whenever their armies now in the field should be ground away and used up by the ceaseless campaigning forced upon them, no others like them could be obtained to take their places. The end of all drew nearer with every charge they made, successful or otherwise, upon the wall of steel and fire that was pitilessly closing in around them.

The resources of the North were not perceptibly diminished. A Rebel officer of Texas cavalry, captured and carried to one of the forts in New York harbor, was paroled late one evening and spent the night at the Astor House, on Broadway, in New York City. He came out upon the steps of the hotel, after breakfast, the next morning, and stood for an hour or so, watching the tide of men flow past him. At first he thought it a



“procession” or the result of some uncommon excitement; but when the truth dawned upon him that this was only the everyday rush of the great city, he sat down and wrote to his friends at the South:

“How they have lied to us! It is of no use. I give it up. There are more men in the North than there were before the war. Ours are all gone, and it’s about time to stop.”

Mr. Lincoln would gladly have seen the entire South arriving at so sensible a decision; but every faint sign of promise in any such direction proved instantly illusory. He was now contending with the wounded pride, rather than the sane hope or expectation, of a group of men in power at Richmond, whose indomitable obstinacy upheld them until the gallant men whom they forced to fight for them were uselessly crushed upon the last vain battle-fields of the civil war.

Fully understanding his antagonists, Mr. Lincoln prepared for the worst. On the 18th of July he called for five hundred thousand more men, the number not furnished by voluntary enlistments to be obtained by a draft, after September 5. Even his enemies were unable to describe so unpopular an act as an electioneering operation in behalf of his re-election. His friends told him, plainly, that it might insure his defeat at the November polls.

Perhaps he had more correctly gauged the temper and understanding of the people. At all events, the summoned men came forward rapidly, a large and valuable percentage of them being veterans who had served their time under previous enlistments.

One after another, every device of the Opposition utterly broke down. Even before election-day it was evident that no danger of Democratic success remained. When the polls were closed and the votes were counted, it was found that the country contained 4,015,902 voters, the greater part of whom were possible fighters. Mr. Lincoln’s enormous majority of 411,428 fairly buried the McClellan electoral tickets. Kentucky and Delaware, old slave-States, with New Jersey, feebly testified

their disgust with Emancipation, but they were of small account in an electoral college of 233 votes, wherein 212 were solidly against them. There could be raised no question of the "constitutionality" of such an election. It was the carefully formed and solemnly announced judgment of the nation. Mr. Lincoln had taken no especial or undue means to secure the political victory, but it was altogether such as he had confidently looked for. It was no surprise to him, and it justified alike his faith in God and in the general right-mindedness of his fellow-citizens.

The people breathed more freely after the election, in spite of the exciting nature of current news from the army.

In the very middle of November began Sherman's "march to the sea," and only one month later, with the tidings that he had reached the coast, came the defeat and demoralization of the last great Rebel army in the West, at Nashville. The fighting in Virginia had been hard and costly, upon both sides, throughout the season. It included the "battles of the Wilderness," the siege of Petersburg, the victories of Sheridan in the Shenandoah Valley, and many another fierce collision of forces, and it ended with the beginning of the final closing in upon Richmond and Lee's army.

There had been three changes in the Cabinet during the year. Mr. Montgomery Blair, Postmaster-General, after rendering valuable services, had been succeeded by Governor William Dennison, of Ohio. Edward Bates, of Missouri, Attorney-General, had been succeeded by Mr. Lincoln's old personal friend, James Speed, of Kentucky. Salmon P. Chase, Secretary of the Treasury, had been succeeded by William Pitt Fessenden, of Maine.

Neither of these changes originated in the personal will or feeling of the President, or implied any dissatisfaction on his part with the official conduct of the gentlemen who tendered their resignations. The precise causes, in either case, have ceased to be important or generally interesting. If there were

peculiar circumstances attending the withdrawal of Mr. Chase, connected with the course taken by his friends prior to the Baltimore Convention, all cause for remembering them was removed by the subsequent action of Mr. Lincoln. Chief-Justice Taney of the Supreme Court died on the 12th of October, and, after giving a full hearing to all who chose to offer advice upon the subject, the President named Mr. Chase as his successor. The possible range of human events could not have offered him a better means for testifying his repudiation of personal animosity and his keen appreciation of patriotic fidelity and capacity.

The appointment to the Supreme Court bench of his old and tried friend and adviser, David Davis, of Illinois, was in a somewhat different way a similar testimonial to personal worth, conferred without regard to political or any other influence to the contrary.

If Mr. Lincoln's utterances and letters, during this period, continually express his increasing religious feeling and his confidence in an overruling Providence, his correspondence with army commanders testifies to his belief that the conduct of military affairs was at last in the right hands. He had his doubts, indeed, as to the wisdom of Sherman's march into Georgia, but he refused to interfere. In a letter to General Grant he said :

"The particulars of your plan I neither know nor seek to know. You are vigilant and self-reliant; and, pleased with this, I wish not to obtrude any restraints or constraints upon you."

General Grant's reply contained this comprehensive testimony :

"From my first entrance into the volunteer service of my country to the present day, I have never had cause of complaint. . . . Indeed, since the promotion which placed me in command of all the armies, and in view of the great responsibility and importance of success, I have been astonished at the

readiness with which everything asked for has been yielded, without even an explanation being asked."

How great a relief was thus obtained by the weary Commander-in-Chief can hardly be estimated. How much he was in need of such relief could only be guessed, at the time, by those who loved him and narrowly noted the visible signs that his iron constitution was beginning to yield to the ceaseless drain and strain.

The overthrow of the Rebellion, the return of peace, might possibly bring him easier times. His mind was stronger and clearer than ever, and his education was still going steadily forward; but his bodily frame was bent and at times it drooped a little, for the burdens yet upon him were almost too much for human endurance.

## CHAPTER LIV.

## A VALEDICTORY.

Putting Emancipation into the Constitution—Sherman in South Carolina—The Peace Conference in Hampton Roads—Useless Bloodshed—The Second Inaugural.

CONGRESS assembled on the 5th of December, 1864, and the President sent in his Message the next day. In this he tersely reviewed the military and political position of the country, at home and abroad. He called attention to the manifest gains of the country in wealth and population, with reference to its undiminished ability to continue the war. He urged the adoption of an Amendment to the Constitution, forever prohibiting human slavery in the United States. He declared that the Rebels could at any time have peace by simply laying down their arms and submitting to the national authority under the Constitution.

At the previous session of the same Congress an effort to provide for such a Constitutional Amendment as Mr. Lincoln advised had failed. The time was not then ripe for it. It was now plain to all, however, that the full time had come, and the necessary two-thirds vote of the House of Representatives was obtained with moderate difficulty, the Senate being already secure.

The President publicly declared to a crowd who assembled at the White House, to congratulate him, that the Amendment seemed to him the one thing needful. It completed and confirmed the work of the Proclamation of Emancipation, if duly ratified by the several States. He urged those who heard him to go home and see that this was done.

The war was pressed with untiring vigor, at every point,

through the month of December. In January the army under General Sherman faced northward, sweeping through South Carolina. Charleston fell into its hands like an over-ripe apple. No force remained with any power to stand in its way, and the Richmond rulers began to realize that their hour was coming. Studying well the terms of peace announced in Mr. Lincoln's message to Congress, but not yet comprehending them, they determined upon a last effort to save something from the impending wreck of the Confederacy.

An informal conference was obtained, February 3, 1865, upon a steamer in Hampton Roads, between the Vice-President of the Confederacy, Alexander H. Stephens, R. M. T. Hunter and J. A. Campbell, representing the Richmond authorities; and Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Seward. The President's assent to this interview was given at the request of General Grant, but with small hope of profitable results. None such were at all possible. No written propositions were made or offered on either side. No formal report of the conversation was permitted, but the substance of it was at once made public, both at the North and South.

The Confederate commissioners desired to obtain a temporary cessation of hostilities, in the nature of an armistice or truce between two independent powers, each reducing their armaments and postponing the express terms and conditions of a permanent peace and settlement to some future time and after further consideration and negotiation. It was argued that the passions of the two peoples would thus have time to cool, commercial and other relations could at once be resumed, and an end could be reached without further bloodshed. What the commissioners omitted to urge was that the Rebellion would thereby gain much more than it could by a sudden destruction of Sherman's army.

Mr. Lincoln's replies were a substantial reproduction of the doctrines announced in his message to Congress, with the addition of the Constitutional Amendment prohibiting slavery.



The commissioners, sincere as might be their desire to obtain a season of rest and recuperation for the Confederacy, with a covert acknowledgment of its independent, treaty-making existence, or earnest as may have been their personal longing for peace, were neither prepared nor empowered to negotiate for a full surrender. The President neither could nor would discuss any other proposition than precisely that, for he was acting solely as Commander-in-Chief. He really possessed no other than strictly military right and power in the premises, for it was not a case of a treaty with a foreign power.

A Georgia newspaper, on the supposed authority of Mr. Stephens, reports Mr. Lincoln as declaring that he could not recognize another government inside the one of which he alone was President. "That," he said, "would be doing what you so long asked Europe to do, in vain, and be resigning the only thing the Union armies are fighting for." Mr. Hunter replied that the recognition of the power of Mr. Davis to make a treaty was the first and indispensable step to peace.

This was a mere play upon words, substituting the idea of a "treaty of peace" with the Richmond authorities for the other idea of a restoration of the peace of the whole country. To point his reply, and as offering one precedent of a constitutional ruler treating with armed rebels, Mr. Hunter cited the correspondence of Charles the First of England with the Parliament. The newspaper report says:

"Mr. Lincoln's face wore that indescribable expression which generally preceded his hardest hits; and he remarked: 'Upon questions of history I must refer you to Mr. Seward, for he is posted in such things, and I don't profess to be; but my only distinct recollection of the matter is that Charles lost his head.'"

There was an old personal friendship between Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Stephens, dating from the time when they were members of Congress together, and the conference assumed therefrom a tone of mutual ease and freedom from constraint; but

the gulf was too wide to be bridged and too deep to be filled up, and the humane desires which led to it suffered their foredoomed disappointment.

The Northern people understood the matter perfectly, with remarkably few exceptions, and there was never an opportunity for the Southern people, generally, to know why the awful bloodshed of the next few weeks was uselessly insisted upon by their obstinate rulers. Peace was not at all denied or withheld from them, and there was no attainable object for which so many of them should suffer or die. The United States, through its President, did but continue its steady denial of the existence as a nation, and of the treaty-making independence, of the Confederacy.

For one month more the war went bitterly on, from day to day. The end of Mr. Lincoln's first term of office, with the beginning of a second term, arrived at 12 o'clock, noon, of the 4th of March, 1865. The term of Congress also expired, and the session with it; but the President convened the Senate, at once, for an "extra session," by proclamation. For a second time Mr. Lincoln took the oath of office as President of the United States. It was a grand and solemn occasion, full of strong and striking contrasts with the same ceremonial, in the same place, four years before.

The crowd which assembled was even larger, this time; but it was a different crowd, with changed hearts and with better and higher hopes. The multitude was not the same. The Man was the same and yet he was not, for behind him as behind them was the fire of the sevenfold furnace through which God had led him. No smell of burning was upon his garments of integrity and faith, but his fetters had been largely burned away. He was almost ready to walk out of the furnace and stand before the King. The oath of office was administered by Chief-Justice Chase; the President looked out for a moment, silently, over the multitude, and then he addressed them, and all other men, as follows:

“Fellow-countrymen: At this second appearing to take the oath of the Presidential office, there is less occasion for an extended address than there was at the first. Then, a statement somewhat in detail of a course to be pursued seemed fitting and proper. Now, at the expiration of four years, during which public declarations have been constantly called forth on every point and phase of the great contest which still absorbs the attention and engrosses the energies of the nation, little that is new could be presented.

“The progress of our arms, upon which all else chiefly depends, is as well known to the public as to myself; and it is, I trust, reasonably satisfactory and encouraging to all. With high hope for the future, no prediction in regard to it is ventured.

“On the occasion corresponding to this, four years ago, all thoughts were anxiously directed to an impending civil war. All dreaded it; all sought to avoid it. While the inaugural address was being delivered from this place, devoted altogether to saving the Union without war, insurgent agents were in the city seeking to destroy it without war—seeking to dissolve the Union and divide the effects by negotiation. Both parties deprecated war; but one of them would make war rather than let the nation survive, and the other would accept war rather than let it perish: and the war came.

“One eighth of the whole population were colored slaves, not distributed generally over the Union, but localized in the southern part of it. These slaves constituted a peculiar and powerful interest. All knew that this interest was somehow the cause of the war. To strengthen, extend, and perpetuate this interest was the object for which the insurgents would rend the Union even by war, while the government claimed no right to do more than restrict the territorial enlargement of it.

“Neither party expected for the war the magnitude or the duration which it has already attained. Neither anticipated

that the cause of the conflict might cease with, or even before, the conflict itself should cease. Each looked for an easier triumph, and a result less fundamental and astounding.

“Both read the same Bible and pray to the same God, and each invokes His aid against the other. It may seem strange that any men should ask a just God’s assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men’s faces; but let us judge not, that we be not judged. The prayers of both could not be answered. That of neither has been answered fully. The Almighty has His own purposes. ‘Woe unto the world because of offenses, for it must needs be that offenses come; but woe unto that man by whom the offense cometh.’ If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of these offenses, which in the providence of God must needs come, but which, having continued through his appointed time, he now wills to remove, and that he gives to both North and South this terrible war, as the woe due to those by whom the offense came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to him? Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may soon pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman’s two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid with another drawn with the sword,—as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, ‘The judgments of the Lord are just and righteous altogether.’

“With malice toward none, with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation’s wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and orphans; to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.”

The inaugural address made a deep impression upon the nation. Nothing at all resembling it had ever been heard before.

A ruler, publicly receiving the trust of four years more of power, felt called upon to set before the people the result of his profound study and analysis of the Divine Providence, as presented in the Scriptures, and to call upon them to join him in acknowledging the wisdom and justice of God. He also, having many times already called upon them to pray with him, deemed it well to refer to the nature of both prayer and its answers. As for his policy as a ruler, he was able, in talking to such a people, to sum it all up in a condensed paraphrase of the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount.

It was not exactly a "state paper," and there was in it a strangely solemn and mournful undertone, not so much heard as felt. It was a Farewell Address of a man whose work was nearly done and who, somehow, was dimly aware of that fact.

Abraham Lincoln's work was indeed done, for all that even then remained was for the hands of others. He had only a few short weeks to wait before turning over all his power and responsibility and toil to those who were to follow. At the same time his education was completed, so far as it could be in this present world. His mind and soul had reached their full development, in a religious life so unconsciously intense and absorbing that it could not otherwise than utter itself in the grand sentences of his last address to the people. The knowledge had come, and the faith had come, and the charity had come; and with all had come the love of God, which put away all thought of rebellious resistance to the will of God, leading as in his earlier days of trial to despair and insanity.

## CHAPTER LV.

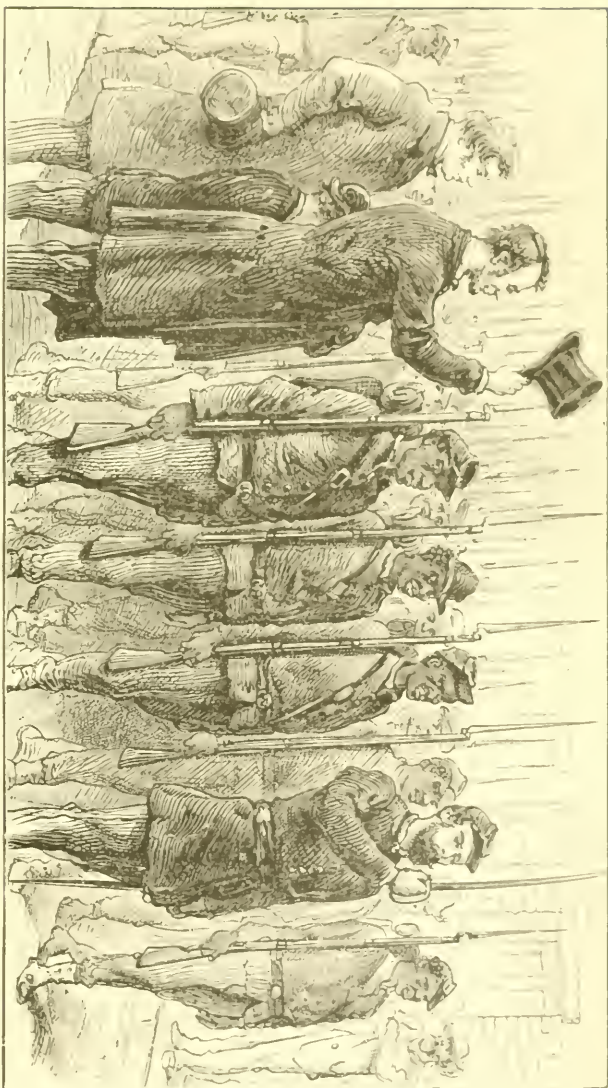
## AT LAST.

A Proclamation of Pardon—Going to the Army—The Death Struggle of the Rebellion—Hemmed in by the Hunters—The President in Richmond—Surrenders of Lee and Johnson—Cessation of the Civil War.

MR. FESSENDEN retired from the Treasury Department, on account of ill-health, on the 6th of March, and Hugh McCulloch, of Indiana, was appointed in his stead; but no other changes were made in the Cabinet. The machinery of the government was all in good order and worked right on, without a pause or a break. There was no occasion for the presence of anxious crowds of office-seekers, as in 1861. This was not in any wise a new Administration. Nevertheless, for a fortnight, there was an increase in the rush and pressure of official duties. In pursuance of an Act of Congress, a proclamation was issued, on the 11th of March, offering pardon to all deserters who should at once return to their posts. A draft for three hundred thousand men more began on the 15th, as if in preparation for possible needs of the army. All matters were settled and adjusted, and then the President, for the first time, indulged himself in what bore a weird and somber likeness to a vacation. On the 22d of the month he went down the Potomac to City Point, to be with the army during the closing struggles of the war. He was very weary, in heart and brain, and he could there escape from many of his daily and hourly tormentors. Not even the very good people who only desired to see him and shake hands with him could all follow him to City Point.

General Sherman's army reached Goldsborough, North Carolina, on the 22d, and the General left it there and came up to consult as to further operations.





LINCOLN AND SUMNER IN RICHMOND.

*A Detachment of Edward Troops passing to occupy Garrison Quarters.*



There was to have been a grand review of the troops on the 23d, but on that day occurred a desperate battle for the possession of Fort Steadman. The Rebels having once taken it, they were driven out of it with heavy losses, and Mr. Lincoln visited the scene of the combat. The enthusiasm with which he was everywhere received by the soldiers enabled him to say, "This is better than a review."

General Sherman arrived and attended a council of war, held on the 28th, at which were also present Mr. Lincoln and Generals Grant, Sheridan, Meade, and Ord. He then shortly rejoined his army, and the results of the consultation followed with terrific rapidity. The operations under Grant began in a few hours after the adjournment of the council. There was some sharp fighting on the next day, Wednesday. Thursday was so stormy as somewhat to interfere with activity, but through Friday, Saturday, and Sunday there was a continuous succession of bloody engagements along the entire front. Mr. Lincoln remained at City Point, receiving reports of the progress-making and sending frequent dispatches to the people. On Sunday he was able to announce "the triumphant success of our armies, after three days of hard fighting, in which both sides displayed unsurpassed valor."

The results were indeed a triumphant success, for the army under Lee had lost one half of its effective men. Twelve thousand of them were prisoners in the hands of the victors, with fifty pieces of artillery. There was no longer any possibility of holding Richmond. There had not been any, in reality, for a long time, and the most obstinate courage was compelled to admit it now. The evacuation was made by the Rebel authorities, civil and military, at once and in haste. What remained of the Rebel fleet in the James River was blown up before the departure, and as little was left of other war-material as the time and opportunity given for destruction or removal permitted.

The Union troops nearest the city were those under General

Weitzel, lying on the north side of the James River. On the morning of Monday, April 3, the Fifth Massachusetts Cavalry was sent out by General Weitzel to reconnoiter. They quickly discovered and reported the flight of the enemy, and the city was entered and occupied by a quarter past eight o'clock. The wearied, half-starved people received the Union troops with demonstrations of joy. They had had a good deal more than enough of Secession and its consequences.

As soon as possible after receiving the news of the evacuation of Richmond, and on the same day, Mr. Lincoln made a visit to the captured city. General Grant was pushing on after Lee with all the forces he could move, and Sherman was hurrying up from the South. There remained no imaginable loophole for the escape of the last Rebel army, and the war was practically over.

Mr. Lincoln was carried by a war-steamer to a point about a mile below Richmond, and the rest of the way in one of the steamer's boats. Senator Sumner was with him ; also little Tad ; and the sailors who rowed the boat went ashore too, as a kind of a suggestion of a body-guard. He did not need any. On foot, almost alone, with a dignity of simplicity which became him wonderfully well, he passed on from street to street. It was something like a dream : and yet all the wild dreams of the Confederate leaders had forever vanished in their enforced abandonment of that town. He was at once recognized by some of the colored people, and the news of his presence spread like wildfire. They thronged around him with all the extravagant expressions of joy and devotion of which their excitement made them capable. General Weitzel's men had to come and serve as a police force to clear the streets. Men and women wept and danced and shouted and praised God.

The President took his hat off, reverently, and bowed ; but he could not speak, for the tears were pouring down his cheeks. The Liberator had come suddenly among the people whose bonds he had broken and to whom he had opened a hope of

free manhood and womanhood in the days that were to be. It was an hour worth living and dying for, and it was given him to see it. He returned to City Point that night, but paid the city another visit two days later with Mrs. Lincoln and Tad, accompanied by Vice-President Johnson and others. Some of the more prominent citizens came to see him, at that time, to discuss the future of the State of Virginia. Among these was Judge Campbell, whom the President had met in the peace conference in Hampton Roads. This gentleman desired him to authorize the assembling of the State Legislature, that by distinct State action the troops of Virginia might be withdrawn from Lee's army and the present condition of affairs accepted. The death of the Rebellion hardly required the verdict of such a local "coroner's jury" as was thus asked for, and the President refused to issue any proclamation in the premises. He afterwards, however, wrote to General Weitzel from City Point, instructing him to permit the assembling of the legislature. He told him to show the note to Judge Campbell, but not to have it made public. The surrender of the army under Lee rendered needless any withdrawal of the Virginia troops, but, much to Mr. Lincoln's disgust, Judge Campbell made public not only the private conversation but also the contents of the note to the general. It was made to appear as an indication of the President's purposes and policy, and it unduly affected the terms made by General Sherman with General Johnston, in the surrender of the part of the Rebel army commanded by the latter. This made some trouble for General Sherman and stirred Mr. Lincoln to a more than ordinary expression of feeling.

Here and there a few remnants of Confederate forces were still in arms, but nowhere was there anything properly to be described as an army. Such as they were, the remnants rapidly surrendered or disbanded, and even the guerilla bands gave it up.

Orders were speedily issued from the War Department for

the cessation of enlistments and for stopping the operation of the draft, with other orders looking to the reduction and eventual disbandment of the armies.

Military restrictions upon trade and commerce between the warring sections were removed as fast as was consistent with local requirements. The whole nation awoke to the glad certainty that Peace had come, and that it had come to stay, and that it had so come as to be worth the having. It had come by the forcible and complete restoration of the authority of the United States over every part and parcel of its territory and population. It had come without treaty, or condition, or compromise. All questions of future citizenship, whether of rebels recently in arms or of black men recently in bondage, were left in the unfettered control of Congress and the President. There were such questions, truly, and they presented momentous problems for statesmen to consider, but the manner of the closing of the war stripped all such problems of artificial complications and left them in shape and condition for swift and sure solution. Mr. Lincoln's views upon the subject of universal suffrage were already well known, and he took specific opportunities for leaving them on record. His desire and hope was that the colored men should become citizens in all respects, without even covert reference to the tint of their skins. He did not remain long enough to see his wishes gratified, but there was no doubt in his mind as to the policy to be pursued by the government. He well knew that the processes required for making good citizens, of even white material, demanded time and opportunity and patient wisdom for the production of tolerable results, and he believed that the requirements of the enfranchised race were measurably the same. They too would need both time and opportunity and patience and intelligent help. The supervision of all that work was to be put into other hands than his, and already he had done what he could.



## CHAPTER LVI.

## PEACE.

A Rejoicing People—Vanity and Revenge conspire to Commit Murder—  
The Assassination—The Mourning of a Mighty Multitude—Voices  
from Distant Lands—The Teachings of a Great Life.

THE idea, at times the dread, of Mr. Lincoln's possible assassination had floated vaguely in the minds of his friends from the very hour of his election. It was again and again suggested to him in many ways, but he invariably refused to give it a serious consideration.

Threats were so freely made, as the war went on, and those around him were so reasonably alarmed, that he was almost compelled to justify with argument his utter indifference. Men would need motives, he thought and said, for the doing of such a deed. "If they kill me, the next man will be just as bad for them; and in a country like this, where our habits are simple, and must be, assassination is always possible, and will come if they are determined upon it."

He came and went, attended or unattended, as the case might be, with careless freedom, not giving the matter any further consideration.

With the collapse of the rebellion and the return of peace, it seemed as if all supposable rational motive for assailing the President's life had vanished, and with it all peril of his assassination.

No words can paint the joy of the nation over the fall of Richmond and the surrender of Lee's army. The bells in all the steeples rang like mad; the cannon boomed; the people met in the churches to praise God; men who did not know

each other stopped in busy streets to shake hands, and turned away with streaming eyes ; mothers and widows quieted their aching hearts in the thought that their sons and husbands had not died in vain ; something of charitable warmth was swelling and reaching out towards the ruined and stricken South. It was an hour of the return of peace on earth and good-will to men, and any previous suggestion of possible murder was forgotten.

Rational motives had indeed all passed away ; but men had failed to take account of two of the viler and meaner passions whereby Hell is represented in the hearts of human beings,—Revenge and Vanity. A combination of these in the minds of several men led to a conspiracy for the murder of Mr. Lincoln, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Seward, General Grant, and, perhaps, some others. It was a very deliberate affair, although miserably planned and imperfectly executed.

The Vice-President escaped unassailed ; Mr. Seward received wounds from which he soon recovered ; and the only part of the conspiracy which fully attained its purpose was that which was put into the base hands of mere vanity in the person of an unsuccessful actor named Booth. This man was not a Southerner ; he was not a soldier ; he was but a fair representative of the meaner, because better educated, Northern “copper-head.”

The Confederacy was but recently dead and had not yet been buried. The new order of things was not yet under way. The President was toiling, day and night, in the settlement of numberless important questions. He was not so strong as formerly, and a breath of recreation was more than ever needful. He was invited by the manager of Ford’s Theater, in Washington, to witness the performance of a play known as “Our American Cousin,” on the evening of the 14th of April. He assented, for he was somewhat fond of the drama. He had made Shakspeare a study to such an extent that he could sit, throughout the most perfect presentation of Falstaff, without

one smile upon his face, absorbed in the delineation of human nature by the master, through the actor.

In the present case he was not eager, knowing nothing of the play; but he yielded to the wifely urgency of Mrs. Lincoln. General Grant was to have been of the party, but had other engagements more imperative which called him out of the city. Mr. Lincoln passed the day as usual. He made an appointment to meet Hon. George Ashmun, of Massachusetts, and Judge Charles P. Daly, of New York, the next morning. He never wasted much time in dressing, and when Mrs. Lincoln came for him he was ready to go with her. They passed on their way to take with them Miss Harris and Major Rathbone, daughter and stepson of Senator Harris, of New York. It was twenty minutes before nine o'clock when they entered the crowded theater, and the throng rose and cheered enthusiastically as they passed on to the "state box" reserved for them.

The murder of the President could have been accomplished more safely and easily at almost any other time and place, but the gratification of diseased vanity and morbid hate required publicity.

John Wilkes Booth, the actor who had selected this for his last tragedy, made his preparations for escape with some care and cunning, as if unaware that the earth contained no cave dark enough to afterwards conceal him. He provided himself with a good horse, in waiting at the rear of the theater, on which to ride away. He entered, looked in upon the stage as if with professional curiosity, and then worked his way around into the outer passage leading towards the box occupied by the President.

One of the President's "messengers" was at the end of an inner passage, leading to the box-door, for the purpose of preventing undue intrusions. To him Booth presented a card, stating that Mr. Lincoln had sent for him. On that lie he was permitted to pass. After overcoming this slight barrier there remained no hindrance to the commission of the murder, for

the President sat quietly in an arm-chair, entirely absorbed in the play.

Booth had a two-edged dagger and a single-barreled Deringer pistol, carrying a heavy ball. With the latter he took full aim at the back of the head so near him and pulled the trigger. The bullet entered the brain, so weary with long toil for others: but the President hardly stirred in his chair. The report of the pistol rang through the house, but for several heart-beats no man seems to have guessed what it meant.

Major Rathbone was the first to comprehend the matter, and he instantly closed with Booth, but was thrown off with a wound in his arm from the dagger.

Freeing himself from the grasp of Rathbone, Booth sprang to the front of the box and leaped upon the stage below. It was but a step down, but his spurs caught in the American flag with which the box was draped, and he half fell. Regaining his feet, he faced the audience for a moment, dagger in hand, spouting theatrically the State motto of Virginia, "*Sic semper tyrannis*," and added, "The South is avenged!"

He was familiar with the exits of the stage. It was easy to dash aside the few bewildered actors and actresses in his way. Only one man, a gentleman named Stewart, was quick-witted enough to spring upon the stage and follow him, and he was too late in doing so. The assassin reached his horse and rode away, escaping for the hour, only to be hunted down and shot in a burning barn in Maryland, some twelve days after the murder.

It was all the work of a few seconds. The fact that the President had been shot fell upon the audience with awful power. Women screamed incoherently or fainted away. Men stood white-faced with dismay and wrath, or blasphemed, or swore revenge. All was uproar and confusion.

The leading actress, Laura Keene, stepped to the front of the stage and begged the audience to be calm. Then she entered the President's box with the water Miss Harris had been calling for, and with stimulants. Mrs. Lincoln was at once and

entirely overcome. She had never shared her husband's indifference to his perpetual peril, but the shock was none the less severe when it now smote upon her so suddenly.

The evil deed had been completely done. Mr. Lincoln was unconscious from the moment when the bullet struck him. There was little need for the verdict of the medical men who gathered so quickly around him, that the hurt was surely fatal, and the news went out to the country untempered by any delusive hope.

There had been a mutual agreement between the conspirators as to the time for striking, and the less successful assault upon Mr. Seward was made at precisely the same hour. Incidental circumstances prevented the remainder of the plot from even attempted execution.

The unconscious President was carried to a private residence, near the theater; and here, at twenty-two minutes past seven o'clock, April 15, 1865, the last tokens of life disappeared.

There was bitter grief among the statesmen and generals who sobbed around that death-bed. Bewildering and agonizing was the sorrow of Mrs. Lincoln and her sons, in the room adjoining. These were of the fallen ruler's flesh and blood and life. Those were the associates and co-workers of his long toil and trial. It was but natural that they should break down, stunned and staggering, under such a blow. The greater marvel was in the immediate effect upon the nation. It was as if there had been a death in every house throughout the land.

The day before the murder, the North had been rejoicing, even beyond the bounds of sober reason. Even the South was drawing long breaths of relief and hope. By both sections alike the awful news was heard with a shudder and with a momentary spasm of unbelief. Then followed one of the most remarkable spectacles in the history of the human race, for there is nothing else at all like it on record. Bells had tolled before at the death of a loved ruler, but never did all bells toll so mournfully as they did that day. Business ceased, except-

ing the purchase of crape. Men came together in public meetings as if by a common impulse, and party lines and sectional hatreds seemed to be obliterated. It is true that here and there an angry voice called aloud for vengeance. It is true that a few bitter-hearted brutes declared their infernal gratification, even at peril of their miserable lives. The former calmed themselves to learn the holier lessons of the hour, and the latter were too few and insignificant to add a black drop of disgrace to the cup of the national sorrow.

The intelligent people of the Southern States felt that their stage-mad "avenger" had inflicted upon them a fresh disaster, and they both publicly and privately expressed their anger and regret.

Their feeling is well illustrated by the action of the Masonic fraternity in Arkansas, locally known as the "Reb. Masons." They were the first to call and hold a meeting to declare and emphasize their condemnation and sorrow, and a hall in Little Rock, the State capital, was well filled with those who assembled. In large part they were ex-Confederate soldiers, many of whom still wore remnants of their army uniforms, and they listened to a funeral oration upon Abraham Lincoln from the lips of a well-known Union man, of the Masonic fraternity. It was but twelve hours after the news of the murder reached Little Rock by telegraph.

The assassination took place on Friday evening, and on the Sunday following funeral services were held in all the churches in the land, and every church was draped in mourning. The ingenuity of grief seemed to exhaust itself in vain attempts for adequate expression. Nowhere was there any visible sign of disorder.

A vague dread of what might possibly come turned every man into a self-appointed guardian of the public peace, robbed of its Constitutional protector. The feeling in the army was intense; but the sternest soldier felt that no act of stupid revenge could honor the memory of a man like Lincoln. Not one such act was undertaken or committed, then or afterwards.



The punishment of the conspirators, under due form of law, was ordinary justice and not mere vengeance. These were all captured and received varying sentences, according to their several adjudged degrees of crime.

After Mr. Lincoln's death, his body was removed to the White House and embalmed. A gathering of Congressmen and other public men, at the Capitol, on Monday, made arrangements for funeral services on Wednesday. Pall-bearers were named, and also a Congressional Committee, representing the several States, to accompany the remains to their resting-place in Illinois.

The funeral services, on Wednesday, were held in the East Room of the Executive Mansion, and from this the coffined body was borne in solemn procession to the catafalque prepared for it in the rotunda of the Capitol. Endless crowds had poured through the East Room, while the body remained there, each passer bending to take a last look at the silent face the nation had loved so well. The same sad stream poured on through the corridors of the Capitol, for none was willing to fail of that final opportunity, and they came from all the region round about.

On the 21st of the month the funeral-train left Washington; and, through all the fifteen hundred miles of its route to Illinois, the mournful pageant of its reception by the people surpasses all power of words for its description. Slowly the train proceeded, from city to city, between almost continuous lines of sorrowing multitudes doing last honors to their beloved Chief Magistrate, whose hold upon their hearts they had not known till they had lost him.

With the remains of Mr. Lincoln were carried those of his beloved son Willie. Father and child had gone Home, forever, and their earthly bodies were borne homeward side by side.

Springfield, Illinois, was reached on the morning of the 3d of May. The grief of Mr. Lincoln's oldest friends and near neigh-

bors could hardly exceed that of many who had never heard him utter a word nor at any time had looked upon his living face. A day later, in the presence of a great multitude, the coffin was placed in a tomb prepared for it in Oak Ridge Cemetery, near the city, with appropriate ceremonials and oratory.

A sort of echo of the National sorrow came back from almost every corner of the world, and many of the tones and expressions were only less surprising than were their sources. America was at once on better terms with Europe, especially, all in a day, when the voices of the trans-Atlantic press were printed in our own newspapers, side by side with the official condolences of foreign potentates. The public uses of the life of Mr. Lincoln did not terminate until this last service had been effected by his death, and the value of it was by no means insignificant.

This is all. The lessons of such a life are very plainly to be read. They should be made familiar to the heart and brain of every American. Every soul born in the United States, or coming to dwell here, should study them well and so learn to understand and love the country wherein alone on earth such a life is possible. It is a land which has been rich in noble men and well-spent lives, both of men and women; but there has been no other just like this. Among all there is not one recorded which is so well adapted to teach and enforce these things: that the lowliest may hopefully strive for the highest elevation; that the most ignorant, under every imaginable disadvantage, may successfully seek for knowledge and its uses; that the most skeptical, broken-hearted, hopeless, despairing of all men, may go on to do his duty to himself and others, turning his eyes and lifting his hands to God and drawing surely nearer to Him.

Whatever were his failings, faults, and flaws, this was the unselfish, truth-seeking and truth-serving life of ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

# APPENDIX.

## A FEW PIVOTAL SPEECHES AND LETTERS OF MR. LINCOLN ALLUDED TO IN THIS VOLUME.

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### I.

#### SPEECH,

Delivered at Springfield, Ill., June 17, 1858.

THE FIRST AFTER MR. LINCOLN'S NOMINATION FOR THE UNITED STATES SENATORSHIP FROM ILLINOIS. (See Ch. XXIII.)

MR. PRESIDENT, AND GENTLEMEN OF THE CONVENTION:—If we could first know where we are, and whither we are tending, we could better judge what to do, and how to do it. We are now far into the fifth year since a policy was initiated with the avowed object, and confident promise, of putting an end to slavery agitation. Under the operation of that policy that agitation has not only not ceased, but has constantly augmented. In my opinion, it will not cease until a crisis shall have been reached and passed. "A house divided against itself cannot stand." I believe this Government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved, I do not expect the house to fall, but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing, or all the other. Either the opponents of slavery will arrest the further spread of it, and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in the course of ultimate extinction; or its advocates will push it forward till it shall become alike lawful in all the States, old as well as new, North as well as South.

Have we no tendency to the latter condition?

Let any one who doubts carefully contemplate that now almost

complete legal combination—piece of machinery, so to speak—compounded of the Nebraska doctrine and the Dred Scott decision. Let him consider not only what work the machinery is adapted to do, and how well adapted; but also let him study the history of its construction, and trace, if he can, or rather fail, if he can, to trace, the evidences of design and concert of action among its chief architects from the beginning.

The new year of 1854 found slavery excluded from more than half the States by State Constitutions, and from most of the national territory by Congressional prohibition. Four days later commenced the struggle which ended in repealing that Congressional prohibition. This opened all the national territory to slavery, and was the first point gained.

But so far Congress only had acted; and an indorsement by the people, real or apparent, was indispensable, to save the point already gained and give chance for more.

This necessity had not been overlooked, but had been provided for, as well as might be, in the notable argument of "squatter sovereignty," otherwise called "sacred right of self-government;" which latter phrase, though expressive of the only rightful basis of any government, was so perverted in this attempted use of it as to amount to just this: That if any *one* man choose to enslave *another*, no *third* man shall be allowed to object. That argument was incorporated into the Nebraska bill itself, in the language which follows: "It being the true intent and meaning of this act not to legislate slavery into any Territory or State, nor to exclude it therefrom; but to leave the people thereof perfectly free to form and regulate their domestic institutions in their own way, subject only to the Constitution of the United States." Then opened the roar of loose declamation in favor of "squatter sovereignty," and "sacred right of self-government." "But," said opposition members, "let us amend the bill so as to expressly declare that the people of the Territory may exclude slavery." "Not we," said the friends of the measure; and down they voted the amendment.

While the Nebraska bill was passing through Congress, a *law-case*, involving the question of a negro's freedom, by reason of his owner having voluntarily taken him first into a free State and

then into a Territory covered by the Congressional prohibition, and held him as a slave for a long time in each, was passing through the United States Circuit Court for the District of Missouri; and both Nebraska bill and lawsuit were brought to a decision in the same month of May, 1854. The negro's name was "Dred Scott," which name now designates the decision finally made in the case. Before the then next Presidential election, the law-case came to, and was argued in, the Supreme Court of the United States; but the decision of it was deferred until after the election. Still, before the election, Senator Trumbull, on the floor of the Senate, requested the leading advocate of the Nebraska bill to state *his opinion* whether the people of a Territory can constitutionally exclude slavery from their limits; and the latter answers: "That is a question for the Supreme Court."

The election came. Mr. Buchanan was elected, and the indorsement, such as it was, secured. That was the second point gained. The indorsement, however, fell short of a clear popular majority by nearly four hundred thousand votes, and so, perhaps, was not overwhelmingly reliable and satisfactory. The outgoing President, in his last annual message, as impressively as possible echoed back upon the people the weight and authority of the indorsement. The Supreme Court met again; did not announce their decision, but ordered a re-argument. The Presidential inauguration came, and still no decision of the court; but the incoming President, in his inaugural address, fervently exhorted the people to abide by the forthcoming decision, whatever it might be. Then, in a few days, came the decision.

The reputed author of the Nebraska bill finds an early occasion to make a speech at this capital, indorsing the Dred Scott decision, and vehemently denouncing all opposition to it. The new President, too, seizes the early occasion of the Silliman letter to indorse and strongly construe that decision, and to express his astonishment that any different view had ever been entertained.

At length a squabble springs up between the President and the author of the Nebraska bill, on the mere question of *fact*, whether the Lecompton Constitution was or was not, in any just sense, made by the people of Kansas; and in that quarrel the latter declares that all he wants is a fair vote for the people, and

that he cares not whether slavery be voted *down* or voted *up*. I do not understand his declaration, that he cares not whether slavery be voted down or voted up, to be intended by him other than as an apt definition of the policy he would impress upon the public mind—the principle for which he declares he has suffered so much, and is ready to suffer to the end. And well may he cling to that principle. If he has any parental feeling, well may he cling to it. That principle is the only shred left of his original Nebraska doctrine. Under the Dred Scott decision “squatter sovereignty” squatted out of existence, tumbled down, like temporary scaffolding—like the mold at the foundry served through one blast and fell back into loose sand—helped to carry an election, and then was kicked to the winds. His late joint struggle with the Republicans, against the Lecompton Constitution, involves nothing of the original Nebraska doctrine. That struggle was made on a point—the right of a people to make their own constitution—upon which he and the Republicans have never differed.

The several points of the Dred Scott decision, in connection with Senator Douglas’s “care not” policy, constitute the piece of machinery, in its present state of advancement. This was the third point gained. The working points of that machinery are:

*First.* That no negro slave, imported as such from Africa, and no descendant of such slave, can ever be a citizen of any State, in the sense of that term as used in the Constitution of the United States. This point is made in order to deprive the negro, in every possible event, of the benefit of that provision of the United States Constitution which declares that “The citizens of each State shall be entitled to all privileges and immunities of citizens in the several States.”

*Secondly.* That, “subject to the Constitution of the United States,” neither Congress nor a Territorial Legislature can exclude slavery from any United States Territory. This point is made in order that individual men may fill up the Territories with slaves without danger of losing them as property, and thus to enhance the chances of permanency to the institution through all the future.

*Thirdly.* That whether the holding a negro in actual slavery



in a free State makes him free, as against the holder, the United States courts will not decide, but will leave to be decided by the courts of any slave-State the negro may be forced into by the master. This point is made, not to be pressed immediately; but, if acquiesced in for a while, and apparently indorsed by the people at an election, then to sustain the logical conclusion that what Dred Scott's master might lawfully do with Dred Scott, in the free State of Illinois, every other master may lawfully do with any other one, or one thousand slaves, in Illinois, or in any other free State.

Auxiliary to all this, and working hand in hand with it, the Nebraska doctrine, or what is left of it, is to educate and mold public opinion, at least Northern public opinion, not to care whether slavery is voted down or voted up. This shows exactly where we now are; and partially, also, whither we are tending.

It will throw additional light on the latter, to go back, and run the mind over the string of historical facts already stated. Several things will now appear less dark and mysterious than they did when they were transpiring. The people were to be left "perfectly free," "subject only to the Constitution." What the Constitution had to do with it, outsiders could not then see. Plainly enough now, it was an exactly fitted niche for the Dred Scott decision to afterward come in, and declare the perfect freedom of the people to be just no freedom at all. Why was the amendment, expressly declaring the right of the people, voted down? Plainly enough now: the adoption of it would have spoiled the niche for the Dred Scott decision. Why was the court decision held up? Why even a Senator's individual opinion withheld till after the Presidential election? Plainly enough now: the speaking out then would have damaged the perfectly free argument upon which the election was to be carried. Why the outgoing President's felicitation on the indorsement? Why the delay of a re-argument? Why the incoming President's advance exhortation in favor of the decision? These things look like the cautious patting and petting of a spirited horse preparatory to mounting him, when it is dreaded that he may give the rider a fall. And why the hasty after-indorsement of the decision by the President and others?

We cannot absolutely know that all these exact adaptations are the result of preconcert. But when we see a lot of framed timbers, different portions of which we know have been gotten out at different times and places, and by different workmen—Stephen, Franklin, Roger, and James, for instance—and when we see these timbers joined together, and see they exactly make the frame of a house or a mill, all the tenons and mortises exactly fitting, and all the lengths and proportions of the different pieces exactly adapted to their respective places, and not a piece too many or too few—not omitting even scaffolding—or, if a single piece be lacking, we see the place in the frame exactly fitted and prepared yet to bring such piece in—in such a case, we find it impossible not to believe that Stephen and Franklin and Roger and James all understood one another from the beginning, and all worked upon a common plan or draft drawn up before the first blow was struck.

It should not be overlooked that, by the Nebraska bill, the people of a *State*, as well as Territory, were to be left “perfectly free,” “subject only to the Constitution.” Why mention a State? They were legislating for Territories, and not for or about States. Certainly, the people of a State are and ought to be subject to the Constitution of the United States; but why is mention of this lugged into this merely territorial law? Why are the people of a Territory and the people of a State therein lumped together, and their relation to the Constitution therein treated as being precisely the same? While the opinion of the court, by Chief-Justice Taney, in the *Dred Scott* case, and the separate opinions of all the concurring Judges, expressly declare that the Constitution of the United States neither permits Congress nor a Territorial Legislature to exclude slavery from any United States Territory, they all omit to declare whether or not the same Constitution permits a State, or the people of a State, to exclude it. *Possibly*, this is a mere omission; but who can be quite sure, if McLean or Curtis had sought to get into the opinion a declaration of unlimited power in the people of a State to exclude slavery from their limits, just as Chase and Mace sought to get such declaration, in behalf of the people of a Territory, into the Nebraska bill;—I ask, who can be quite sure that

it would not have been voted down in the one case, as it had been in the other? The nearest approach to the point of declaring the power of a State over slavery is made by Judge Nelson. He approaches it more than once, using the precise idea, and almost the language, too, of the Nebraska act. On one occasion, his exact language is, "Except in cases where the power is restrained by the Constitution of the United States, the law of the State is supreme over the subject of slavery within its jurisdiction." In what cases the power of the States is so restrained by the United States Constitution is left an open question, precisely as the same question as to the restraint on the power of the Territories, was left open in the Nebraska act. Put this and that together, and we have another nice little niche, which we may, ere long, see filled with another Supreme Court decision, declaring that the Constitution of the United States does not permit a *State* to exclude slavery from its limits. And this may especially be expected, if the doctrine of "care not whether slavery be voted down or voted up" shall gain upon the public mind sufficiently to give promise that such a decision can be maintained when made.

Such a decision is all that slavery now lacks of being alike lawful in all the States. Welcome or unwelcome, such decision is probably coming, and will soon be upon us, unless the power of the present political dynasty shall be met and overthrown. We shall lie down pleasantly dreaming that the people of Missouri are on the verge of making their State free, and we shall awake to the reality, instead, that the Supreme Court has made Illinois a slave-State. To meet and overthrow the power of that dynasty is the work now before all those who would prevent that consummation. That is what we have to do. How can we best do it?

There are those who denounce us openly to their own friends, and yet whisper us softly that Senator Douglas is the aptest instrument there is with which to effect that object. They wish us to *infer* all, from the fact that he now has a little quarrel with the present head of the dynasty; and that he has regularly voted with us on a single point, upon which he and we have never differed. They remind us that he is a great man, and that

the largest of us are very small ones. Let this be granted. But "a living dog is better than a dead lion." Judge Douglas, if not a dead lion, for this work, is at least a caged and toothless one. How can he oppose the advances of slavery? He don't care anything about it. His avowed mission is impressing the "public heart" to *care nothing about it*. A leading Douglas Democratic newspaper thinks Douglas's superior talent will be needed to resist the revival of the African slave-trade. Does Douglas believe an effort to revive that trade is approaching? He has not said so. Does he really think so? But if it is, how can he resist it? For years he has labored to prove it a sacred right of white men to take negro slaves into the new Territories. Can he possibly show that it is less a sacred right to buy them where they can be bought cheapest? And unquestionably they can be bought cheaper in Africa than in Virginia. He has done all in his power to reduce the whole question of slavery to one of a mere right of property; and as such, how can he oppose the foreign slave-trade—how can he refuse that trade in that "property" shall be "perfectly free"—unless he does it as a protection to the home production? And as the home producers will probably not ask the protection, he will be wholly without a ground of opposition.

Senator Douglas holds, we know, that a man may rightfully be wiser to-day than he was yesterday—that he may rightfully change when he finds himself wrong. But can we, for that reason, run ahead, and infer that he will make any particular change, of which he himself has given no intimation? Can we safely base our action upon any such vague inference? Now, as ever, I wish not to misrepresent Judge Douglas's position, question his motives, or do aught that can be personally offensive to him. Whenever, if ever, he and we can come together on principle, so that our cause may have assistance from his great ability, I hope to have interposed no adventitious obstacle. But, clearly, he is not now with us—he does not pretend to be—he does not promise ever to be.

Our cause, then, must be intrusted to, and conducted by, its own undoubted friends—those whose hands are free, whose hearts are in the work—who *do care* for the result. Two years

ago, the Republicans of the nation mustered over thirteen hundred thousand strong. We did this under the single impulse of resistance to a common danger, with every external circumstance against us. Of strange, discordant, and even hostile elements, we gathered from the four winds, and formed and fought the battle through, under the constant hot fire of a disciplined proud, and pampered enemy. Did we brave all then, to falter now?—now, when that same enemy is wavering, dissevered, and belligerent? The result is not doubtful. We shall not fail—if we stand firm, we *shall not fail*. Wise counsels may accelerate, or mistakes delay it; but, sooner or later, the victory is sure to come.

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## II.

## SPEECH,

Delivered at Cooper Institute, New York, Feb. 27, 1860. (See Ch. XXIV.)

MR. PRESIDENT, AND FELLOW-CITIZENS OF NEW YORK: The facts with which I shall deal this evening are mainly old and familiar; nor is there anything new in the general use I shall make of them. If there shall be any novelty, it will be in the mode of presenting the facts, and the inferences and observations following that presentation.

In his speech last autumn, at Columbus, Ohio, as reported in the *New York Times*, Senator Douglas said:

*“Our fathers, when they framed the government under which we live, understood this question just as well, and even better than we do now.”*

I fully indorse this, and I adopt it as a text for this discourse. I so adopt it because it furnishes a precise and an agreed starting-point for a discussion between Republicans and that wing of the Democracy headed by Senator Douglas. It simply leaves the inquiry: *“What was the understanding those fathers had of the question mentioned?”*

What is the frame of government under which we live?



The answer must be: "The Constitution of the United States." That Constitution consists of the original, framed in 1787 (and under which the present government first went into operation), and twelve subsequently framed amendments, the first ten of which were framed in 1789.

Who were our fathers that framed the Constitution? I suppose the "thirty-nine" who signed the original instrument may be fairly called our fathers who framed that part of the present government. It is almost exactly true to say they framed it, and it is altogether true to say they fairly represented the opinion and sentiment of the whole nation at that time.

Their names, being familiar to nearly all, and accessible to quite all, need not now be repeated.

I take these "thirty-nine," for the present, as being our "fathers who framed the government under which we live."

What is the question which, according to the text, those fathers understood "just as well, and even better than we do now"?

It is this: Does the proper division of local from Federal authority, or anything in the Constitution, forbid *our Federal Government* to control as to slavery in *our Federal Territories*?

Upon this Senator Douglas holds the affirmative, and Republicans the negative. This affirmation and denial form an issue, and this issue—this question—is precisely what the text declares our fathers understood "better than we."

Let us now inquire whether the "thirty-nine," or any of them, acted upon this question; and if they did, how they acted upon it—how they expressed that better understanding.

In 1784, three years before the Constitution—the United States then owning the Northwestern Territory, and no other—the Congress of the Confederation had before them the question of prohibiting slavery in that Territory; and four of the "thirty-nine" who afterward framed the Constitution were in that Congress and voted on that question. Of these, Roger Sherman, Thomas Mifflin, and Hugh Williamson voted for the prohibition, thus showing that, in their understanding, no line dividing local from Federal authority, nor anything else, properly forbade the Federal Government to control as to slavery



in Federal territory. The other of the four—James M'Henry—voted against the prohibition, showing that, for some cause, he thought it improper to vote for it.

In 1787, still before the Constitution, but while the Convention was in session framing it, and while the Northwestern Territory still was the only territory owned by the United States, the same question of prohibiting slavery in the territory again came before the Congress of the Confederation; and two more of the "thirty-nine" who afterward signed the Constitution were in that Congress, and voted on the question. They were William Blount and William Few; and they both voted for the prohibition—thus showing that, in their understanding, no line dividing local from Federal authority, nor anything else, properly forbade the Federal Government to control as to slavery in Federal territory. This time the prohibition became a law, being part of what is now well known as the Ordinance of '87.

The question of Federal control of slavery in the Territories seems not to have been directly before the Convention which framed the original Constitution; and hence it is not recorded that the "thirty-nine," or any of them, while engaged on that instrument, expressed any opinion on that precise question.

In 1789, by the first Congress which sat under the Constitution, an act was passed to enforce the Ordinance of '87, including the prohibition of slavery in the Northwestern Territory. The bill for this act was reported by one of the "thirty-nine," Thomas Fitzsimmons, then a member of the House of Representatives from Pennsylvania. It went through all its stages without a word of opposition, and finally passed both branches without yeas and nays, which is equivalent to a unanimous passage. In this Congress there were sixteen of the thirty-nine fathers who framed the original Constitution. They were John Langdon, Nicholas Gilman, William S. Johnson, Roger Sherman, Robert Morris, Thomas Fitzsimmons, William Few, Abraham Baldwin, Rufus King, William Paterson, George Clymer, Richard Bassett, George Read, Pierce Butler, Daniel Carroll, James Madison.

This shows that, in their understanding, no line dividing local

from Federal authority, nor anything in the Constitution, properly forbade Congress to prohibit slavery in the Federal territory; else both their fidelity to correct principles, and their oath to support the Constitution, would have constrained them to oppose the prohibition.

Again: George Washington, another of the "thirty-nine," was then President of the United States, and, as such, approved and signed the bill; thus completing its validity as a law, and thus showing that, in his understanding, no line dividing local from Federal authority, nor anything in the Constitution, forbade the Federal Government to control as to slavery in Federal territory.

No great while after the adoption of the original Constitution, North Carolina ceded to the Federal Government the country now constituting the State of Tennessee; and, a few years later, Georgia ceded that which now constitutes the States of Mississippi and Alabama. In both deeds of cession it was made a condition by the ceding States that the Federal Government should not prohibit slavery in the ceded country. Besides this, slavery was then actually in the ceded country. Under these circumstances, Congress, on taking charge of these countries, did not absolutely prohibit slavery within them. But they did interfere with it—take control of it—even there, to a certain extent. In 1798 Congress organized the Territory of Mississippi. In the act of organization, they prohibited the bringing of slaves into the Territory, from any place without the United States, by force, and giving freedom to slaves so brought. This act passed both branches of Congress without yeas and nays. In that Congress were three of the "thirty-nine" who framed the original Constitution. They were John Langdon, George Read, and Abraham Baldwin. They all, probably, voted for it. Certainly they would have placed their opposition to it upon record, if, in their understanding, any line dividing local from Federal authority, or anything in the Constitution, properly forbade the Federal Government to control as to slavery in Federal territory.

In 1803 the Federal Government purchased the Louisiana country. Our former territorial acquisitions came from certain

of our own States; but this Louisiana country was acquired from a foreign nation. In 1804 Congress gave a territorial organization to that part of it which now constitutes the State of Louisiana. New Orleans, lying within that part, was an old and comparatively large city. There were other considerable towns and settlements, and slavery was extensively and thoroughly intermingled with the people. Congress did not, in the Territorial Act, prohibit slavery; but they did interfere with it—take control of it—in a more marked and extensive way than they did in the case of Mississippi. The substance of the provision therein made in relation to slaves was:

*First.* That no slave should be imported into the Territory from foreign parts.

*Second.* That no slave should be carried into it who had been imported into the United States since the first day of May, 1798.

*Third.* That no slave should be carried into it except by the owner, and for his own use as a settler; the penalty in all the cases being a fine upon the violator of the law, and freedom to the slave.

This act also was passed without yeas and nays. In the Congress which passed it there were two of the “thirty-nine.” They were Abraham Baldwin and Jonathan Dayton. As stated in the case of Mississippi, it is probable they both voted for it. They would not have allowed it to pass without recording their opposition to it, if, in their understanding, it violated either the line properly dividing local from Federal authority, or any provision of the Constitution.

In 1819–20 came and passed the Missouri question. Many votes were taken, by yeas and nays, in both branches of Congress, upon the various phases of the general question. Two of the “thirty-nine”—Rufus King and Charles Pinckney—were members of that Congress. Mr. King steadily voted for slavery prohibition and against all compromises, while Mr. Pinckney as steadily voted against slavery prohibition and against all compromises. By this Mr. King showed that, in his understanding, no line dividing local from Federal authority, nor anything in the Constitution, was violated by Congress prohibiting slavery

in Federal territory; while Mr. Pinckney, by his vote, showed that, in his understanding, there was some sufficient reason for opposing such prohibition in that case.

The cases I have mentioned are the only acts of the "thirty-nine," or of any of them, upon the direct issue, which I have been able to discover.

To enumerate the persons who thus acted, as being four in 1784, two in 1787, seventeen in 1789, three in 1798, two in 1804, and two in 1819-20, there would be thirty of them. But this would be counting John Langdon, Roger Sherman, William Few, Rufus King, and George Read, each twice, and Abraham Baldwin three times. The true number of those of the "thirty-nine" whom I have shown to have acted upon the question which, by the text, they understood better than we is twenty-three, leaving sixteen not shown to have acted upon it in any way.

Here, then, we have twenty-three out of our thirty-nine fathers "who framed the government under which we live," who have, upon their official responsibility and their corporal oaths, acted upon the very question which the text affirms they "understood just as well, and even better than we do now;" and twenty-one of them—a clear majority of the whole "thirty-nine"—so acting upon it as to make them guilty of gross political impropriety and willful perjury, if, in their understanding, any proper division between local and Federal authority, or anything in the Constitution they had made themselves, and sworn to support, forbade the Federal Government to control as to slavery in the Federal Territories. Thus the twenty-one acted; and, as actions speak louder than words, so actions, under such responsibility, speak still louder.

Two of the twenty-three voted against Congressional prohibition of slavery in the Federal Territories, in the instances in which they acted upon the question. But for what reasons they so voted is not known. They may have done so because they thought a proper division of local from Federal authority, or some provision or principle of the Constitution, stood in the way; or they may, without any such question, have voted against the prohibition on what appeared to them to be suffi-

cient grounds of expediency. No one who has sworn to support the Constitution can conscientiously vote for what he understands to be an unconstitutional measure, however expedient he may think it; but one may and ought to vote against a measure which he deems constitutional, if, at the same time, he deems it inexpedient. It therefore would be unsafe to set down even the two who voted against the prohibition as having done so because, in their understanding, any proper division of local from Federal authority, or anything in the Constitution, forbade the Federal Government to control as to slavery in Federal territory.

The remaining sixteen of the "thirty-nine," so far as I have discovered, have left no record of their understanding upon the direct question of Federal control of slavery in the Federal Territories. But there is much reason to believe that their understanding upon that question would not have appeared different from that of their twenty-three compeers, had it been manifested at all.

For the purpose of adhering rigidly to the text, I have purposely omitted whatever understanding may have been manifested by any person, however distinguished, other than the thirty-nine fathers who framed the original Constitution; and, for the same reason, I have also omitted whatever understanding may have been manifested by any of the "thirty-nine," even, on any other phase of the general question of slavery. If we should look into their acts and declarations on those other phases, as the foreign slave-trade, and the morality and policy of slavery generally, it would appear to us that on the direct question of Federal control of slavery in Federal Territories, the sixteen, if they had acted at all, would probably have acted just as the twenty-three did. Among that sixteen were several of the most noted antislavery men of those times,—as Dr. Franklin, Alexander Hamilton, and Gouverneur Morris,—while there was not one now known to have been otherwise, unless it may be John Rutledge, of South Carolina.

The sum of the whole is, that of our thirty-nine fathers who framed the original Constitution, twenty-one—a clear majority of the whole—certainly understood that no proper division of



local from Federal authority, nor any part of the Constitution, forbade the Federal Government to control slavery in the Federal Territories; whilst all the rest probably had the same understanding. Such, unquestionably, was the understanding of our fathers who framed the original Constitution; and the text affirms that they understood the question "better than we."

But, so far, I have been considering the understanding of the question manifested by the framers of the original Constitution. In and by the original instrument, a mode was provided for amending it; and, as I have already stated, the present frame of "the government under which we live" consists of that original, and twelve amendatory articles framed and adopted since. Those who now insist that Federal control of slavery in Federal Territories violates the Constitution, point us to the provisions which they suppose it thus violates; and, as I understand, they all fix upon provisions in these amendatory articles, and not in the original instrument. The Supreme Court, in the *Dred Scott* case, plant themselves upon the fifth amendment, which provides that no person shall be deprived of "life, liberty, or property without due process of law;" while Senator Douglas and his peculiar adherents plant themselves upon the tenth amendment, providing that "the powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution" "are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people."

Now, it so happens that these amendments were framed by the first Congress which sat under the Constitution—the identical Congress which passed the act already mentioned, enforcing the prohibition of slavery in the Northwestern Territory. Not only was it the same Congress, but they were the identical same individual men who, at the same session, and at the same time within the session, had under consideration, and in progress toward maturity, these Constitutional amendments, and this act prohibiting slavery in all the territory the nation then owned. The Constitutional amendments were introduced before, and passed after, the act enforcing the Ordinance of '87; so that, during the whole pendency of the act to enforce the Ordinance, the Constitutional amendments were also pending.

The seventy-six members of that Congress, including sixteen



of the framers of the original Constitution, as before stated, were pre-eminently our fathers who framed that part of "the government under which we live" which is now claimed as forbidding the Federal Government to control slavery in the Federal Territories.

Is it not a little presumptuous in any one at this day to affirm that the two things which that Congress deliberately framed, and carried to maturity at the same time, are absolutely inconsistent with each other? And does not such affirmation become impudently absurd when coupled with the other affirmation from the same mouth, that those who did the two things alleged to be inconsistent understood whether they really were inconsistent better than we—better than he who affirms that they are inconsistent?

It is surely safe to assume that the thirty-nine framers of the original Constitution, and the seventy-six members of the Congress which framed the amendments thereto, taken together, do certainly include those who may be fairly called "our fathers who framed the government under which we live." And, so assuming, I defy any man to show that any one of them ever, in his whole life, declared that, in his understanding, any proper division of local from Federal authority, or any part of the Constitution, forbade the Federal Government to control as to slavery in the Federal Territories. I go a step further. I defy any one to show that any living man in the whole world ever did, prior to the beginning of the present century (and I might almost say prior to the beginning of the last half of the present century), declare that, in his understanding, any proper division of local from Federal authority, or any part of the Constitution, forbade the Federal Government to control as to slavery in the Federal Territories. To those who now so declare, I give not only "our fathers who framed the government under which we live," but with them all other living men within the century in which it was framed, among whom to search, and they shall not be able to find the evidence of a single man agreeing with them.

Now, and here, let me guard a little against being misunderstood. I do not mean to say we are bound to follow implicitly

in whatever our fathers did. To do so would be to discard all the lights of current experience—to reject all progress, all improvement. What I do say is, that if we would supplant the opinions and policy of our fathers in any case, we should do so upon evidence so conclusive, and argument so clear, that even their great authority, fairly considered and weighed, cannot stand; and most surely not in a case whereof we ourselves declare they understood the question better than we.

If any man at this day sincerely believes that proper division of local from Federal authority, or any part of the Constitution, forbids the Federal Government to control as to slavery in the Federal Territories, he is right to say so, and to enforce his position by all truthful evidence and fair argument which he can. But he has no right to mislead others who have less access to history, and less leisure to study it, into the false belief that “our fathers who framed the government under which we live” were of the same opinion—thus substituting falsehood and deception for truthful evidence and fair argument. If any man at this day sincerely believes “our fathers who framed the government under which we live” used and applied principles, in other cases, which ought to have led them to understand that a proper division of local from Federal authority, or some part of the Constitution, forbids the Federal Government to control as to slavery in the Federal Territories, he is right to say so. But he should, at the same time, brave the responsibility of declaring that, in his opinion, he understands their principles better than they did themselves; and especially should he not shirk that responsibility by asserting that they “understood the question just as well, and even better than we do now.”

But enough! *Let all who believe that “our fathers who framed the government under which we live understood this question just as well, and even better than we do now,” speak as they spoke, and act as they acted upon it. This is all Republicans ask—all Republicans desire—in relation to slavery. As those fathers marked it, so let it be again marked, as an evil not to be extended, but to be tolerated and protected only because of, and so far as, its actual presence among us makes that toleration and protection a necessity. Let all the guaranties those*

*fathers gave it be not grudgingly, but fully and fairly maintained.* For this Republicans contend, and with this, so far as I know or believe, they will be content.

And now, if they would listen—as I suppose they will not—I would address a few words to the Southern people.

I would say to them: You consider yourselves a reasonable and a just people; and I consider that in the general qualities of reason and justice you are not inferior to any other people. Still, when you speak of us Republicans, you do so only to denounce us as reptiles, or, at the best, as no better than outlaws. You will grant a hearing to pirates or murderers, but nothing like it to “Black Republicans.” In all your contentions with one another, each of you deems an unconditional condemnation of “Black Republicanism” as the first thing to be attended to. Indeed, such condemnation of us seems to be an indispensable prerequisite—license, so to speak—among you, to be admitted or permitted to speak at all. Now, can you, or not, be prevailed upon to pause, and to consider whether this is quite just to us, or even to yourselves? Bring forward your charges and specifications, and then be patient long enough to hear us deny or justify.

You say we are sectional. We deny it. That makes an issue; and the burden of proof is upon you. You produce your proof; and what is it? Why, that our party has no existence in your section—gets no votes in your section. The fact is substantially true; but does it prove the issue? If it does, then in case we should, without change of principle, begin to get votes in your section, we should thereby cease to be sectional. You cannot escape this conclusion; and yet, are you willing to abide by it? If you are, you will probably soon find that we have ceased to be sectional, for we shall get votes in your section this very year. You will then begin to discover, as the truth plainly is, that your proof does not touch the issue. The fact that we get no votes in your section is a fact of your making, and not of ours. And if there be fault in that fact, that fault is primarily yours, and remains so until you show that we repel you by some wrong principle or practice. If we do repel you by any wrong principle or practice, the fault is ours; but this brings you to

where you ought to have started—to a discussion of the right or wrong of our principle. If our principle, put in practice, would wrong your section for the benefit of ours, or for any other object, then our principle, and we with it, are sectional, and are justly opposed and denounced as such. Meet us, then, on the question of whether our principle, put in practice, would wrong your section; and so meet us as if it were possible that something may be said on our side. Do you accept the challenge? No! Then you really believe that the principle which “our fathers who framed the government under which we live” thought so clearly right as to adopt it, and indorse it again and again, upon their official oaths, is in fact so clearly wrong as to demand your condemnation without a moment’s consideration.

Some of you delight to flaunt in our faces the warning against sectional parties given by Washington in his Farewell Address. Less than eight years before Washington gave that warning, he had, as President of the United States, approved and signed an act of Congress enforcing the prohibition of slavery in the Northwestern Territory, which act embodied the policy of the government upon that subject up to, and at, the very moment he penned that warning; and about one year after he penned it, he wrote La Fayette that he considered that prohibition a wise measure, expressing in the same connection his hope that we should at some time have a confederacy of free States.

Bearing this in mind, and seeing that sectionalism has since arisen upon this same subject, is that warning a weapon in your hands against us, or in our hands against you? Could Washington himself speak, would he cast the blame of that sectionalism upon us, who sustain his policy, or upon you, who repudiate it? We respect that warning of Washington, and we commend it to you, together with his example pointing to the right application of it.

But you say you are conservative—eminently conservative—while we are revolutionary, destructive, or something of the sort. What is conservatism? Is it not adherence to the old and tried, against a new and untried? We stick to, contend for, the identical old policy on the point in controversy which was adopted by “our fathers who framed the government under

which we live;" while you with one accord reject, and scout, and spit upon that old policy, and insist upon substituting something new. True, you disagree among yourselves as to what that substitute shall be. You are divided on new propositions and plans, but you are unanimous in rejecting and denouncing the old policy of the fathers. Some of you are for reviving the foreign slave-trade; some for a Congressional Slave-Code for the Territories; some for Congress forbidding the Territories to prohibit slavery within their limits; some for maintaining slavery in the Territories through the judiciary; some for the "gur-reat pur-rinciple" that "if one man would enslave another, no third man should object," fantastically called "Popular Sovereignty;" but never a man among you in favor of Federal prohibition of slavery in Federal Territories, according to the practice of "our fathers who framed the government under which we live." Not one of all your various plans can show a precedent or an advocate in the century within which our government originated. Consider, then, whether your claim of conservatism for yourselves, and your charge of destructiveness against us, are based on the most clear and stable foundations.

Again: you say we have made the slavery question more prominent than it formerly was. We deny it. We admit that it is more prominent, but we deny that we made it so. It was not we, but you, who discarded the old policy of the fathers. We resisted, and still resist your innovation; and thence comes the greater prominence of the question. Would you have that question reduced to its former proportions? Go back to that old policy. What has been will be again, under the same conditions. If you would have the peace of the old times, readopt the precepts and policy of the old times.

You charge that we stir up insurrections among your slaves. We deny it; and what is your proof? Harper's Ferry! John Brown!! John Brown was no Republican; and you have failed to implicate a single Republican in his Harper's Ferry enterprise. If any member of our party is guilty in that matter, you know it or you do not know it. If you do know it, you are inexcusable for not designating the man and proving the fact. If you do not know it, you are inexcusable for asserting it, and



especially for persisting in the assertion after you have tried and failed to make the proof. You need not be told that persisting in a charge which one does not know to be true is simply malicious slander.

Some of you admit that no Republican designedly aided or encouraged the Harper's Ferry affair; but still insist that our doctrines and declarations necessarily lead to such results. We do not believe it. We know we hold to no doctrine, and make no declaration, which were not held to and made by "our fathers who framed the government under which we live." You never dealt fairly by us in relation to this affair. When it occurred, some important State elections were near at hand, and you were in evident glee with the belief that, by charging the blame upon us, you could get an advantage of us in those elections. The elections came, and your expectations were not quite fulfilled. Every Republican man knew that, as to himself at least, your charge was a slander, and he was not much inclined by it to cast his vote in your favor. Republican doctrines and declarations are accompanied with a continued protest against any interference whatever with your slaves, or with you about your slaves. Surely, this does not encourage them to revolt. True, we do, in common with "our fathers who framed the government under which we live," declare our belief that slavery is wrong; but the slaves do not hear us declare even this. For anything we say or do, the slaves would scarcely know there is a Republican party. I believe they would not, in fact, generally know it but for your misrepresentations of us in their hearing. In your political contests among yourselves, each faction charges the other with sympathy with Black Republicanism; and then, to give point to the charge, defines Black Republicanism to simply be insurrection, blood, and thunder among the slaves.

Slave-insurrections are no more common now than they were before the Republican party was organized. What induced the Southampton insurrection, twenty-eight years ago, in which at least three times as many lives were lost as at Harper's Ferry? You can scarcely stretch your very elastic fancy to the conclusion that Southampton was "got up by Black Republicanism."



In the present state of things in the United States, I do not think a general or even a very extensive slave-insurrection is possible. The indispensable concert of action cannot be attained. The slaves have no means of rapid communication; nor can incendiary freemen, black or white, supply it. The explosive materials are everywhere in parcels; but there neither are, nor can be supplied, the indispensable connecting-trains.

Much is said by Southern people about the affection of slaves for their masters and mistresses; and a part of it, at least, is true. A plot for an uprising could scarcely be devised and communicated to twenty individuals before some one of them, to save the life of a favorite master or mistress, would divulge it. This is the rule; and the slave-revolution in Hayti was not an exception to it, but a case occurring under peculiar circumstances. The gunpowder-plot of British history, though not connected with slaves, was more in point. In that case, only about twenty were admitted to the secret; and yet one of them, in his anxiety to save a friend, betrayed the plot to that friend, and, by consequence, averted the calamity. Occasional poisonings from the kitchen, and open or stealthy assassinations in the field, and local revolts, extending to a score or so, will continue to occur as the natural results of slavery; but no general insurrection of slaves, as I think, can happen in this country for a long time. Whoever much fears or much hopes for such an event will be alike disappointed.

In the language of Mr. Jefferson, uttered many years ago, "It is still in our power to direct the process of emancipation and deportation peaceably, and in such slow degrees as that the evil will wear off insensibly; and their places be, *pari passu*, filled up by free white laborers. If, on the contrary, it is left to force itself on, human nature must shudder at the prospect held up."

Mr. Jefferson did not mean to say, nor do I, that the power of emancipation is in the Federal Government. He spoke of Virginia; and, as to the power of emancipation, I speak of the slave-holding States only. The Federal Government, however, as we insist, has the power of restraining the extension of the institution—the power to insure that a slave-insurrection shall

never occur on any American soil which is now free from slavery.

John Brown's effort was peculiar. It was not a slave-insurrection. It was an attempt by white men to get up a revolt among slaves, in which the slaves refused to participate. In fact, it was so absurd that the slaves, with all their ignorance, saw plainly enough it could not succeed. That affair, in its philosophy, corresponds with the many attempts related in history at the assassination of kings and emperors. An enthusiast broods over the oppression of a people till he fancies himself commissioned by Heaven to liberate them. He ventures the attempt, which ends in little else than his own execution. Orsini's attempt on Louis Napoleon and John Brown's attempt at Harper's Ferry were, in their philosophy, precisely the same. The eagerness to cast blame on old England in the one case, and on New England in the other, does not disprove the sameness of the two things.

And how much would it avail you, if you could, by the use of John Brown, Helper's Book, and the like, break up the Republican organization? Human action can be modified to some extent, but human nature cannot be changed. There is a judgment and a feeling against slavery in this nation which cast at least a million and a half of votes. You cannot destroy that judgment and feeling—that sentiment—by breaking up the political organization which rallies around it. You can scarcely scatter and disperse an army which has been formed into order in the face of your heaviest fire; but if you could, how much would you gain by forcing the sentiment which created it out of the peaceful channel of the ballot-box into some other channel? What would that other channel probably be? Would the number of John Browns be lessened or enlarged by the operation?

But you will break up the Union rather than submit to a denial of your Constitutional rights.

That has a somewhat reckless sound; but it would be palliated, if not fully justified, were we proposing, by the mere force of numbers, to deprive you of some right plainly written down in the Constitution. But we are proposing no such thing.

When you make these declarations, you have a specific and

well-understood allusion to an assumed Constitutional right of yours to take slaves into the Federal Territories, and to hold them there as property. But no such right is specifically written in the Constitution. That instrument is literally silent about any such right. We, on the contrary, deny that such a right has any existence in the Constitution, even by implication.

Your purpose, then, plainly stated, is, that you will destroy the government unless you be allowed to construe and enforce the Constitution as you please on all points in dispute between you and us. You will rule or ruin, in all events.

This, plainly stated, is your language. Perhaps you will say the Supreme Court has decided the disputed Constitutional question in your favor. Not quite so. But, waiving the lawyer's distinction between dictum and decision, the Court have decided the question for you in a sort of way. The Court have substantially said, it is your Constitutional right to take slaves into the Federal Territories, and to hold them there as property. When I say the decision was made in a sort of way, I mean it was made in a divided Court, by a bare majority of the judges, and they not quite agreeing with one another in the reasons for making it; that it is so made as that its avowed supporters disagree with one another about its meaning, and that it was mainly based upon a mistaken statement of fact—the statement in the opinion that “the right of property in a slave is distinctly and expressly affirmed in the Constitution.”

An inspection of the Constitution will show that the right of property in a slave is not “*distinctly and expressly* affirmed” in it. Bear in mind, the judges do not pledge their judicial opinion that such right is *impliedly* affirmed in the Constitution; but they pledge their veracity that it is “*distinctly and expressly*” affirmed there—“distinctly,” that is, not mingled with anything else; “expressly,” that is, in words meaning just that, without the aid of any inference, and susceptible of no other meaning.

If they had only pledged their judicial opinion that such right is affirmed in the instrument by implication, it would be open to others to show that neither the word “slave” nor “slavery” is

to be found in the Constitution, nor the word "property," even, in any connection with language alluding to the things slave or slavery; and that wherever in that instrument the slave is alluded to, he is called a "person;" and wherever his master's legal right in relation to him is alluded to, it is spoken of as "service or labor which may be due,"—as a debt payable in service or labor. Also, it would be open to show, by contemporaneous history, that this mode of alluding to slaves and slavery, instead of speaking of them, was employed on purpose to exclude from the Constitution the idea that there could be property in man.

To show all this is easy and certain.

When this obvious mistake of the judges shall be brought to their notice, is it not reasonable to expect that they will withdraw the mistaken statement, and reconsider the conclusion based upon it?

And then it is to be remembered that "our fathers who framed the government under which we live"—the men who made the Constitution—decided this same Constitutional question in our favor, long ago: decided it without division among themselves when making the decision; without division among themselves about the meaning of it after it was made, and, so far as any evidence is left, without basing it upon any mistaken statement of facts.

Under all these circumstances, do you really feel yourselves justified to break up this government, unless such a court decision as yours is shall be at once submitted to as a conclusive and final rule of political action? But you will not abide the election of a Republican President! In that supposed event, you say, you will destroy the Union; and then, you say, the great crime of having destroyed it will be upon us! That is cool. A highwayman holds a pistol to my ear, and mutters through his teeth, "Stand and deliver, or I shall kill you, and then you will be a murderer!"

To be sure, what the robber demanded of me—my money—was my own; and I had a clear right to keep it. But it was no more my own than my vote is my own; and the threat of death to me to extort my money, and the threat of destruction to the

Union to extort my vote, can scarcely be distinguished in principle.

A few words now to Republicans. *It is exceedingly desirable that all parts of this great confederacy shall be at peace, and in harmony one with another. Let us Republicans do our part to have it so. Even though much provoked, let us do nothing through passion and ill-temper. Even though the Southern people will not so much as listen to us, let us calmly consider their demands, and yield to them if, in our deliberate view of our duty, we possibly can.* Judging by all they say and do, and by the subject and nature of their controversy with us, let us determine, if we can, what will satisfy them.

Will they be satisfied if the Territories be unconditionally surrendered to them? We know they will not. In all their present complaints against us, the Territories are scarcely mentioned. Invasions and insurrections are the rage now. Will it satisfy them if, in the future, we have nothing to do with invasions and insurrections? We know it will not. We so know, because we know we never had anything to do with invasions and insurrections; and yet this total abstaining does not exempt us from the charge and the denunciation.

The question recurs, What will satisfy them? Simply this: We must not only let them alone, but we must, somehow, convince them that we do let them alone. This, we know by experience, is no easy task. We have been so trying to convince them from the very beginning of our organization, but with no success. In all our platforms and speeches we have constantly protested our purpose to let them alone; but this has had no tendency to convince them. Alike unavailing to convince them is the fact that they have never detected a man of us in any attempt to disturb them.

These natural and apparently adequate means all failing, what will convince them? This, and this only: cease to call slavery *wrong*, and join them in calling it *right*. And this must be done thoroughly—done in *acts* as well as in *words*. Silence will not be tolerated: we must place ourselves avowedly with them. Senator Douglas's new sedition-law must be enacted and enforced, suppressing all declarations that



slavery is wrong, whether made in politics, in presses, in pulpits, or in private. We must arrest and return their fugitive slaves with greedy pleasure. We must pull down our free-State Constitutions. The whole atmosphere must be disinfected from all taint of opposition to slavery, before they will cease to believe that all their troubles proceed from us.

I am quite aware they do not state their case precisely in this way. Most of them would probably say to us, "Let us alone, *do* nothing to us, and *say* what you please about slavery." But we do let them alone—have never disturbed them; so that, after all, it is what we say which dissatisfies them. They will continue to accuse us of doing until we cease saying.

I am also aware they have not as yet, in terms, demanded the overthrow of our free-State Constitutions. Yet those Constitutions declare the wrong of slavery, with more solemn emphasis than do all other sayings against it; and when all these other sayings shall have been silenced, the overthrow of these Constitutions will be demanded, and nothing be left to resist the demand. It is nothing to the contrary, that they do not demand the whole of this just now. Demanding what they do, and for the reason they do, they can voluntarily stop nowhere short of this consummation. Holding as they do that slavery is morally right and socially elevating, they cannot cease to demand a full national recognition of it, as a legal right and a social blessing.

Nor can we justifiably withhold this on any ground save our conviction that slavery is wrong. If slavery is right, all words, acts, laws, and constitutions against it are themselves wrong, and should be silenced and swept away. If it is right, we cannot justly object to its nationality—its universality; if it is wrong, they cannot justly insist upon its extension—its enlargement. All they ask we could readily grant, if we thought slavery right; all we ask they could as readily grant, if they thought it wrong. Their thinking it right, and our thinking it wrong, is the precise fact upon which depends the whole controversy. Thinking it right, as they do, they are not to blame for desiring its full recognition, as being right; but, thinking it wrong, as we do, can we yield to them? Can we cast our votes



with their view and against our own? In view of our moral, social, and political responsibilities, can we do this?

Wrong as we think slavery is, we can yet afford to let it alone where it is, because that much is due to the necessity arising from its actual presence in the nation; but can we, while our votes will prevent it, allow it to spread into the National Territories, and to overrun us here in these free States? If our sense of duty forbids this, then let us stand by our duty fearlessly and effectively. Let us be diverted by none of those sophistical contrivances wherewith we are so industriously plied and belabored—contrivances such as groping for some middle ground between the right and the wrong, vain as the search for a man who should be neither a living man nor a dead man; such as a policy of “don’t care” on a question about which all true men do care; such as Union appeals beseeching true Union men to yield to Disunionists, reversing the divine rule, and calling, not the sinners, but the righteous to repentance; such as invocations to Washington, imploring men to unsay what Washington said, and undo what Washington did.

Neither let us be slandered from our duty by false accusations against us, nor frightened from it by menaces of destruction to the government or of dungeons to ourselves. LET US HAVE FAITH THAT RIGHT MAKES MIGHT, AND IN THAT FAITH LET US, TO THE END, DARE TO DO OUR DUTY AS WE UNDERSTAND IT.

### III.

#### LETTER,

TO THE UNCONDITIONAL UNION MEN.

(See Ch. XLIX.)

EXECUTIVE MANSION,  
WASHINGTON, August 26, 1863.

*Hon. James C. Conkling.*

MY DEAR SIR: Your letter inviting me to attend a mass-meeting of unconditional Union men, to be held at the capital of Illinois, on the 3d day of September, has been received. It

would be very agreeable for me thus to meet my old friends at my own home; but I cannot just now be absent from here so long as a visit there would require.

The meeting is to be of all those who maintain unconditional devotion to the Union; and I am sure that my old political friends will thank me for tendering, as I do, the nation's gratitude to those other noble men whom no partisan malice or partisan hope can make false to the nation's life.

There are those who are dissatisfied with me. To such I would say: You desire peace, and you blame me that we do not have it. But how can we attain it? There are but three conceivable ways. First, to suppress the rebellion by force of arms. This I am trying to do. Are you for it? If you are, so far we are agreed. If you are not for it, a *second* way is to give up the Union. I am against this. Are you for it? If you are, you should say so plainly. If you are not for *force*, nor yet for *dissolution*, there only remains some imaginable *compromise*.

I do not believe that any compromise embracing the maintenance of the Union is now possible. All that I learn leads to a directly opposite belief. The strength of the rebellion is its military, its army. That army dominates all the country, and all the people, within its range. Any offer of terms made by any man or men within that range, in opposition to that army, is simply nothing for the present; because such man or men have no power whatever to enforce their side of a compromise, if one were made with them.

To illustrate: Suppose refugees from the South and peace men of the North get together in convention, and frame and proclaim a compromise embracing a restoration of the Union. In what way can that compromise be used to keep Lee's army out of Pennsylvania? Meade's army can keep Lee's army out of Pennsylvania, and, I think, can ultimately drive it out of existence. But no paper compromise to which the controllers of Lee's army are not agreed can at all affect that army. In an effort at such compromise we would waste time, which the enemy would improve to our disadvantage; and that would be all.

A compromise, to be effective, must be made either with

those who control the rebel army, or with the people, first liberated from the domination of that army by the success of our own army. Now, allow me to assure you that no word or intimation from that rebel army, or from any of the men controlling it, in relation to any peace compromise, has ever come to my knowledge or belief. All charges and insinuations to the contrary are deceptive and groundless. And I promise you that if any such proposition shall hereafter come, it shall not be rejected and kept a secret from you. I freely acknowledge myself to be the servant of the people, according to the bond of service, the United States Constitution; and that, as such, I am responsible to them.

But to be plain. You are dissatisfied with me about the negro. Quite likely there is a difference of opinion between you and myself upon that subject. I certainly wish that all men could be free, while you, I suppose, do not. Yet I have neither adopted nor proposed any measure which is not consistent with even your view, provided that you are for the Union. I suggested compensated emancipation; to which you replied you wished not to be taxed to buy negroes. But I had not asked you to be taxed to buy negroes, except in such way as to save you from greater taxation to save the Union exclusively by other means.

You dislike the Emancipation Proclamation, and perhaps would have it retracted. You say it is unconstitutional. I think differently. I think the Constitution invests its Commander-in-Chief with the law of war in time of war. The most that can be said, if so much, is, that slaves are property. Is there, has there ever been, any question that by the law of war, property, both of enemies and friends, may be taken when needed? And is it not needed whenever it helps us and hurts the enemy? Armies, the world over, destroy enemies' property when they cannot use it; and even destroy their own to keep it from the enemy. Civilized belligerents do all in their power to help themselves or hurt the enemy, except a few things regarded as barbarous or cruel. Among the exceptions are the massacre of vanquished foes and non-combatants, male and female.

But the Proclamation, as law, either is valid or is not valid.

If it is not valid, it needs no retraction. If it is valid, it cannot be retracted, any more than the dead can be brought to life. Some of you profess to think its retraction would operate favorably for the Union. Why better *after* the retraction than *before* the issue? There was more than a year and a half of trial to suppress the rebellion before the Proclamation was issued, the last one hundred days of which passed under an explicit notice that it was coming, unless averted by those in revolt returning to their allegiance. The war has certainly progressed as favorably for us since the issue of the Proclamation as before.

I know, as fully as one can know the opinions of others, that some of the commanders of our armies in the field, who have given us our most important victories, believe the Emancipation policy and the use of colored troops constitute the heaviest blows yet dealt to the rebellion, and that at least one of those important successes could not have been achieved when it was but for the aid of black soldiers.

Among the commanders who hold these views are some who have never had any affinity with what is called "Abolitionism," or with "Republican party politics," but who hold them purely as military opinions. I submit their opinions as entitled to some weight against the objections often urged that emancipation and arming the blacks are unwise as military measures, and were not adopted as such in good faith.

You say that you will not fight to free negroes. Some of them seem willing to fight for you; but no matter. Fight you, then, exclusively to save the Union. I issued the Proclamation on purpose to aid you in saving the Union. Whenever you shall have conquered all resistance to the Union, if I shall urge you to continue fighting, it will be an apt time then for you to declare you will not fight to free negroes. I thought that in your struggle for the Union, to whatever extent the negroes should cease helping the enemy, to that extent it weakened the enemy in his resistance to you. Do you think differently? I thought that whatever negroes can be got to do as soldiers, leaves just so much less for white soldiers to do in saving the Union. Does it appear otherwise to you? But negroes, like

other people, act upon motives. Why should they do anything for us if we will do nothing for them? If they stake their lives for us they must be prompted by the strongest motive, even the promise of freedom. And the promise, being made, must be kept.

The signs look better. The Father of Waters again goes unvexed to the sea. Thanks to the great Northwest for it; nor yet wholly to them. Three hundred miles up they met New England, Empire, Keystone, and Jersey, hewing their way right and left. The sunny South, too, in more colors than one, also lent a helping hand. On the spot, their part of the history was jotted down in black and white. The job was a great national one, and let none be slighted who bore an honorable part in it. And while those who have cleared the great river may well be proud, even that is not all. It is hard to say that anything has been more bravely and well done than at Antietam, Murfreesborough, Gettysburg, and on many fields of less note. Nor must Uncle Sam's web-feet be forgotten. At all the watery margins they have been present, not only on the deep sea, the broad bay, and the rapid river, but also up the narrow, muddy bayou, and wherever the ground was a little damp, they have been and made their tracks. Thanks to all. For the great Republic; for the principle it lives by and keeps alive; for man's vast future—thanks to all.

Peace does not appear so distant as it did. I hope it will come soon, and come to stay; and so come as to be worth the keeping in all future time. It will then have been proved that among freemen there can be no successful appeal from the ballot to the bullet, and that they who take such appeal are sure to lose their case and pay the cost. And there will be some black men who can remember that with silent tongue, and clinched teeth, and steady eye, and well-poised bayonet, they have helped mankind on to this great consummation, while I fear there will be some white ones unable to forget that with malignant heart and deceitful speech they have striven to hinder it.

Still, let us not be over-sanguine of a speedy, final triumph. Let us be quite sober. Let us diligently apply the means, never doubting that a just God, in His own good time, will give us the rightful result.

Yours, very truly,

A. LINCOLN.

## IV.

## LETTER,

CONCERNING THE GOVERNMENT'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS SLAVERY.

(See Ch. XLI.)

GOVERNOR BRAMLETTE and some other Kentucky gentlemen having called upon the President in relation to the draft in Kentucky, the following letter from the President was called forth by the conversation which then ensued:

EXECUTIVE MANSION,  
WASHINGTON, April 4, 1864.

*A. G. Hodges, Esq., Frankfort, Ky.*

MY DEAR SIR: You ask me to put in writing the substance of what I verbally said the other day, in your presence, to Governor Bramlette and Senator Dixon. It was about as follows:

"I am naturally antislavery. If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong. I cannot remember when I did not so think and feel, and yet I have never understood that the Presidency conferred upon me an unrestricted right to act officially upon this judgment and feeling. It was in the oath I took that I would, to the best of my ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States. I could not take the office without taking the oath. Nor was it my view that I might take an oath to get power, and break the oath in using the power. I understood, too, that in ordinary civil administration this oath even forbade me to practically indulge my primary abstract judgment on the moral question of slavery. I had publicly declared this many times, and in many ways. And I aver that, to this day, I have done no official act in mere deference to my abstract judgment and feeling on slavery. I did understand, however, that my oath to preserve the Constitution to the best of my ability imposed upon me the duty of preserving, by every indispensable means, that government—that nation, of which that Constitution was the organic law. Was it possible to lose the nation and yet preserve the Constitution? By gen-



eral law, life *and* limb must be protected; yet often a limb must be amputated to save a life; but a life is never wisely given to save a limb. I felt that measures otherwise unconstitutional might become lawful by becoming indispensable to the preservation of the Constitution, through the preservation of the nation. Right or wrong, I assumed this ground, and now avow it. I could not feel that, to the best of my ability, I had even tried to preserve the Constitution, if, to save slavery or any minor matter, I should permit the wreck of government, country, and Constitutional together. When, early in the war, General Frémont attempted military emancipation, I forbade it, because I did not then think it an indispensable necessity. When, a little later, General Cameron, then Secretary of War, suggested the arming of the blacks, I objected, because I did not yet think it an indispensable necessity. When, still later, General Hunter attempted military emancipation, I again forbade it, because I did not yet think the indispensable necessity had come. When, in March, and May, and July, 1862, I made earnest and successive appeals to the border-States to favor compensated emancipation, I believed the indispensable necessity for military emancipation and arming the blacks would come, unless averted by that measure. They declined the proposition, and I was, in my best judgment, driven to the alternative of either surrendering the Union, and with it the Constitution, or of laying strong hand upon the colored element. I chose the latter. In choosing it, I hoped for greater gain than loss, but of this I was not entirely confident. More than a year of trial now shows no loss by it in our foreign relations, none in our home popular sentiment, none in our white military force, no loss by it anyhow or anywhere. On the contrary, it shows a gain of quite a hundred and thirty thousand soldiers, seamen, and laborers. These are palpable facts, about which, as facts, there can be no caviling. We have the men, and we could not have had them without the measure.

“And now let any Union man who complains of the measure test himself by writing down in one line that he is for subduing the rebellion by force of arms, and in the next that he is for taking three hundred and thirty thousand men from the Union side and placing them where they would be best for the measure

he condemns. If he cannot face his case so stated, it is only because he cannot face the truth."

I add a word which was not in the verbal conversation. In telling this tale, I attempt no compliment to my own sagacity, I claim not to have controlled events, but confess plainly that events have controlled me. Now, at the end of three years' struggle, the nation's condition is not what either party, or any man, devised or expected. God alone can claim it. Whither it is tending seems plain. If God now wills the removal of a great wrong, and wills also that we of the North, as well as you of the South, shall pay fairly for our complicity in that wrong, impartial history will find therein new causes to attest and revere the justice and goodness of God.

Yours truly,  
A. LINCOLN.

## V.

### POEM,

BY TOM TAYLOR.

### ABRAHAM LINCOLN.\*

FOULLY ASSASSINATED, APRIL 14, 1865.

You lay a wreath on murdered Lincoln's bier,  
*You*, who with mocking pencil wont to trace,  
 Broad for the self-complacent British sneer,  
 His length of shambling limb, his furrowed face,  
 His gaunt, gnarled hands, his unkempt, bristling hair,  
 His garb uncouth, his bearing ill at ease,  
 His lack of all we prize as debonair,  
 Of power or will to shine, of art to please;

\* This tribute appeared in the London *Punch*, which, up to the time of the assassination of Mr. Lincoln, had ridiculed and maligned him with all its well-known powers of pen and pencil. It is the poem alluded to on page 402.

*You*, whose smart pen backed up the pencil's laugh,  
Judging each step as though the way were plain,  
Reckless, so it could point its paragraph  
Of chief's perplexity, or people's pain:

Beside this corpse, that bears for winding-sheet  
The Stars and Stripes he lived to rear anew,  
Between the mourners at his head and feet,  
Say, scurrile jester, is there room for *you*?

Yes: he had lived to shame me from my sneer,  
To lame my pencil, and confute my pen;  
To make me own this hind of princes peer,  
This rail-splitter a true-born king of men.

My shallow judgment I had learned to rue,  
Noting how to occasion's height he rose;  
How his quaint wit made home-truth seem more true;  
How, iron-like, his temper grew by blows.

How humble, yet how hopeful, he could be;  
How, in good fortune and in ill, the same;  
Nor bitter in success, nor boastful he,  
Thirsty for gold, nor feverish for fame.

He went about his work,—such work as few  
Ever had laid on head and heart and hand,—  
As one who knows, where there's a task to do,  
Man's honest will must Heaven's good grace command;

Who trusts the strength will with the burden grow,  
That God makes instruments to work his will,  
If but that will we can arrive to know,  
Nor tamper with the weights of good and ill.

So he went forth to battle, on the side  
That he felt clear was Liberty's and Right's,  
As in his peasant boyhood he had plied  
His warfare with rude Nature's thwarting might;

The uncleared forest, the unbroken soil,  
The iron-bark, that turns the lumberer's ax,

The rapid, that o'erbears the boatman's toil,  
The prairie, hiding the mazed wanderer's tracks,

The ambushed Indian, and the prowling bear,—  
Such were the deeds that helped his youth to train:  
Rough culture, but such trees large fruit may bear,  
If but their stocks be of right girth and grain.

So he grew up, a destined work to do,  
And lived to do it: four long-suffering years'  
Ill-fate, ill-feeling, ill-report, lived through,  
And then he heard the hisses change to cheers,

The taunts to tribute, the abuse to praise,  
And took both with the same unwavering mood;  
Till, as he came on light, from darkling days,  
And seemed to touch the goal from where he stood,

A felon hand, between the goal and him,  
Reached from behind his back, a trigger prest,  
And those perplexed and patient eyes were dim,  
Those gaunt, long-laboring limbs were laid to rest!

The words of mercy were upon his lips,  
Forgiveness in his heart and on his pen,  
When this vile murderer brought swift eclipse  
To thoughts of peace on earth, good-will to men.

The Old World and the New, from sea to sea,  
Utter one voice of sympathy and shame:  
Sore heart, so stopped when it at last beat high;  
Sad life, cut short just as its triumph came!

A deed accurst! Strokes have been struck before  
By the assassin's hand, whereof men doubt  
If more of horror or disgrace they bore;  
But thy foul crime, like Cain's, stands darkly out.

Vile hand, that brandest murder on a strife,  
Whate'er its grounds, stoutly and nobly striven;  
And with the martyr's crown crownest a life  
With much to praise, little to be forgiven.

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